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MRS. LARKALL'S BOARDING SCHOOL.

By the Author of "Man and His Idol."

CHAPTER XIV. FOR THE LAST TIME.

Alas! she was not all she might have been.
She had not that high strength of mind, that takes
its own pure standing-place upon life's scene,
And guards a heart, all virtue's, till it breaks.

The words which Peter Wolff had uttered seemed to produce a maddening effect on Roland Hershaw. His face reddened and the veins on his brow swelled up like cords.

"What do you mean, scoundrel?" he demanded.
"Just what I say. I—"

But he had not time to finish the sentence. Roland Hershaw, exasperated beyond all bounds by the daring and effrontery of this man, and by the pertinacity with which he adhered to his audacious statement, suddenly lost all control over himself, and raised his clenched fist as if about to aim a blow at the audacious intruder.

The quick eye of Peter Wolff detected the action, and his own right hand closed with a grip of iron on the wrist of the younger man.

Then, for an instant, the two men stood face to face, their eyes glaring, their faces distorted with passion, their gloved hands clenched.

"Coward!" gasped Wolff, evidently trying his utmost to be calm. "You know I could return that blow."

"You dare not," sneered the other.

"Not here. Not before women. But—"

"Ha! You threaten; do you?" shrieked Roland.

"Yes, son of the denounced Estrid, and I do not threaten in vain."

Roland Hershaw glanced at the man who uttered these words, but his face grew death-like, his hands unclenched, and he recoiled a step or two.

Peter Wolff drew himself up to his full height, and there was a cold, cruel light in the eyes with which he regarded his victim.

[THE FRACAS AT MRS. LARKALL'S EVENING PARTY.]

"I—I apologise," muttered Roland, abjectly, hardly knowing what he said; "I was mistaken."

"That's right, that's right!" cried the delighted Snaggs, who had hovered about the men in mortal terror, yet feeling it was his duty to interfere. "Mr. Hershaw apologises. You accept the apology, Mr. Mr.—"

"Palmer," said Wolff.

The start of rage which Roland gave caused Snaggs to bound from him like a pea on a drum-head.

"Dear me, dear me, it's very odd, very odd, indeed," he twittered, hopping about as a dyed and curled canary in evening dress, with two waistcoats, one white, one—the under one—red, might be supposed to do. "A gentleman not to know his own name! Never heard such a thing in the whole course of my professional experience, never!"

The situation was a most embarrassing one, and it was pretty evident that Snaggs would not improve it. Roland felt that, and also that he alone was to blame, in having permitted his strong feelings to get the better of him. So, turning to Mrs. Larkall, who had been a terrified spectator of the outrage, he said:

"I must offer you an abject apology, madam, for what has taken place. It is my fault—mine only. This gentleman has taken a liberty in assuming the name of a member of my family; but I had no right to resent it here. My doing so was an unjustifiable act—a violation of the privileges of hospitality, which I can hardly hope that you will overlook or pardon."

"The fault was mine," said Mrs. Larkall. "I was guilty of a breach of etiquette in not giving you the opportunity of introducing your own friend. I did it unthinkingly—"

"And in the goodness of your heart," interposed Peter Wolff. "It is I alone who am to blame. I am an intruder. But I should not have been here, but that, in addition to having an appointment with my friend, I felt that my name and relations gave me some claims to an introduction to Mrs. Larkall herself."

"If—"

Mrs. Larkall was about to reply.

Roland Hershaw interposed.

In the few moments since Wolff uttered the words which had so startled him, his quick and crafty brain had decided on a course of action.

"If," he cried, with a sneer in his tone, and a defiant glance at the man who confronted him; "if he were really the man he represents himself to be—if he were really the nephew of Arnold Roydon Protheroe, the Indian merchant, he would be welcome to this house."

"Most welcome," said Mrs. Larkall.

"I know it: but he is not that man!"

"How?" cried Peter Wolff, savagely. "Take care!"

"He is an impostor!"

Wolff clenched his fists.

"He is a nameless outcast—a miserable object, who, having heard the story of Protheroe's nephew, seeks to pass himself off as the missing man."

"You will prove these words!" the accused muttered, fiercely.

"I shall; when you offer proofs that you are the man whose name you have dared to assume. Come, sir; the proof, the proof!"

Wolff saw that he was caught in a trap. But his adventurous life had made him ready at overcoming obstacles.

"Gentlemen do not, as a rule, carry proofs of their identity about with them," he said. "Tis not customary. If my card is of any use to you, there it is."

And he took out a neat card-case full of cards, printed only that day, and handed one. It bore his assumed name. Roland took it, and the sight of it somewhat shook his coolness, since it showed determination on the part of the man, who had evidently resolved to raise himself on the foundation of the hint given him, and to destroy the means by which he hoped to rise. Nevertheless, he managed to preserve his coolness.

"A ready expedient, which no impostor would overlook," he said.

Mrs. Larkall interposed.

"Do you really know nothing of this person?" she asked.

"Nothing."
 "He is not a friend of yours?"
 "Friend! I recognize him as a man who a few days since came to me for charity."

"And his claim to be Mr. Protheroe's nephew, and heir to his estates?"

"Is false!"
 "Is true!" cried Wolff earnestly, "as this man will know, ere long."

"You threaten me?" cried Roland.

"I?—No; it is enough for me to denounce."

"Pshaw! Who would believe you on your oath?"

"You ask? You who are already known as the son of the Count—"

Roland raised his hand with manifest trepidation.

"Well, well," grinned the fellow, "as you will. It matters not though. *It is too late!*"

The earnestness of this reply struck all present. Mrs. Larkall herself was greatly moved; Roland trembled, and Gertrude, who stood beside him, betrayed a sympathetic emotion. But that was hardly strange, for she had recognized Wolff from the first, as the man against whom she had so audaciously brought a charge of theft at the Towers, to screen herself from the consequences of her own wickedness. The memory of that night was strong upon her, and seeing how strongly Roland was moved, it suddenly occurred to her that she might aid him in gaining the advantage over this strange adversary. So, in a momentary pause which ensued, she stepped forward.

"I know this man," she said.

"You, Gertrude?" cried Mrs. Larkall.

"Yes, I have met him once, and only once; but I could swear to him among a thousand."

"Indeed! Why?"

"Because it was he who was at the Towers on the night of the robbery. It was he who escaped from Mr. Hershaw's grasp and disappeared. It was he who stole my string-of-diamonds."

"Right!" cried Roland, catching at the idea eagerly.

"It was he."

"You both saw him at the Towers," said the school-mistress.

"Yes, Mahala also—ah! she is here. She will speak. Yes or no?" said Roland.

There was an instant's doubt, a passing shade of hesitation on the part of the ayah, while she set her hatred for Gertrude against her covetous love of the treasure in her bosom. Then she answered boldly:

"It was this man."

Peter Wolff stood in the midst of his accusers with a scared look. Prepared for other contingencies, that was so unexpected, so undreamed of, that he was taken utterly unawares.

"It is true that I was at the Towers," he faltered, "but it was to see the man who now accuses me of this crime. It was to warn him of a danger—"

"And for that reason you fled like a hunted hare, and hid yourself in the darkness of the night?" demanded his accuser.

"And this," asked Mrs. Larkall, "was on the very night when poor Amy Robert disappeared, was it not so?"

"Yes," said Gertrude.

"Who knows then—"

Peter Wolff could bear no more.

"Let me speak," he burst in.

"You'd better not," interrupted Snaggs, capering up redder than ever in the face. "I've read your character with half an eye, and have taken steps accordingly. Mrs. Larkall, officers of justice are in the room. I've fetched them from the street-door."

As he spoke, two policemen, in their long great-coats, advanced.

Mrs. Larkall eyed them with nervous trepidation.

"Oh! Mr. Snaggs, this is wrong, this is indiscreet," she said. "My establishment will be ruined."

"Have no fear," said Roland; "the offence was committed in Essex; the trial will take place there. Your establishment need not transpire by name. Now, Miss Norman, I believe you charge this person, Peter Wolff, by name—"

"Peter Roydon Palmer, by name," said the accused.

"Oh, we need not quarrel about your *aliases*," said Roland, cleverly; "with stealing your diamond necklace?"

"I do!" replied Gertrude, firmly.

"Any witnesses?" asked one of the officers.

"Yes. Here is one—Mahala; I am another!" replied Roland.

"Things found on him, sir?"

"The diamonds have not been found."

"If you take me on that charge, officers, you will take me at your peril!" said Wolff, who was white with rage.

"Oh, that's what they always say!" retorted the officer; "It's for us to secure you; it's for you to prove your innocence in the regular way."

Within ten minutes, Peter Wolff had made his exit from Mrs. Larkall's boarding-school, handcuffed to one

of the officers, who sat beside him in a cab, which was being driven rapidly toward the police-station.

This interruption to the evening, long as it has taken to describe, did not last more than a few minutes; but its effects were perceptible for some time. A cloud seemed to have come over the bright scene. People wondered and talked—wondered what Mrs. Larkall's connection with the strange man could have been; talked of the singularity of the proceeding in connection with those other and equally singular affairs which traditional gossip had stored up against the mistress of the establishment.

The announcement of supper—the re-commencement of dancing—the exhilarating music, and the manifest happiness of the "young people," served, however, at length to restore the tone of the evening, and the ball went on as before.

Meanwhile, Roland Hershaw took occasion to slip away, and gain a few minutes for reflection, and to sum up the position in which he found himself.

There was at the back of the house a long, narrow garden, not very lively or floral in its aspect at the best of times, and singularly bare and bleak on this January night. Down the middle of this strip of land ran a mere ribbon of grass leading to a seat beneath a tree which, leafy and bowing in summer, was now utterly bare, its thin stems rising up against the grey sky, as if in horror of some deed perpetrated beneath it.

Having found out this strip of grass, Roland lit a cigar, and walked slowly up and down it, his feet falling without a sound, occasionally looking back at the house—every window of which had a bright festive look—but more frequently lost in his own reflections.

This was how he summed up his position at that moment:

"Some desperate step is inevitable," he reflected. "That fellow Wolff has been too clever for me. Directly I gave him the clue to a fortune, by mentioning old Protheroe's heir, Palmer, and my conviction that he was dead, what does he do? He determines to go in for the fortune *alone*, to throw me overboard; and for that purpose he denounces me to some member of the secret society—if any member still exists of the proper rank—or, which is just as likely, determines to put an end to me himself. Then his course would be clear. He has only to give proof of the old man's death; and all the world knows that he was supposed to be lost at sea in a ship, in which by a little tact he could show him to have gone as a passenger on board, and then he quietly drops in as heir-at-law. Now, if I can convict him of stealing this necklace, I shall, first, get him out of the way for the time, and, secondly, weaken his chances of doing anything, since a convicted felon is always listened to with suspicion. There is danger in this, I know it. But, after all, the fellow *knows* nothing: he only *suspects*. As to that tale of Joanna and her mystical powers, it's a fiction—a pure fiction. So far I've done right. Meanwhile my course is to marry Gertrude out of hand, make every arrangement for showing that the old man is dead, that his nephew also is no more, for since Wolff turns scoundrel I have no one else who could personate the nephew, and so must fall back on my first plan, and then prove the will, which will give Gertrude right and title to everything; or, if it answers better, destroy the will, and let her naturally come in for everything, as the sole survivor of the race."

A neat little programme this.

It had its difficulties and its drawbacks; but the man who had drawn it up was deterred by neither. He had a clear head, a cunning brain, a conscience hard as the nether mill-stone.

Looking into that frank, open face, those blue eyes, and the child-like looks which strayed about his clear brow, no one would have suspected the truth or honesty of Roland Hershaw. No one would have thought that the rosy tips of the fingers between which he now held his cigar, had been red with blood.

"The marriage over, the money fingered, and I fly—with Amy, darling Amy! Heaven grant she may be well when the hour comes; but well or ill, I cannot, I will not part from her. To live in the hope that those true eyes will one day open to a knowledge of me, and those lips speak my name tenderly as of old is to live with an object dear enough to redeem all."

Musing thus, the young man walked until his cigar tip nearly touched his lips, until he was chilled to the bone, until his thin boots were sopping with the night-dew, and he was weary.

Then, as he reached the seat beneath the tree, he threw himself down with a sigh, and flinging away the cigar-end, buried his face in his hands.

His thoughts went back to Wolff.

"The fellow braved it out well," he said half-aloud.

"He was right," said a voice close to him.

He could feel the warm breath of the speaker upon his ear: yet when he turned he saw nothing.

"Who speaks?" he demanded angrily.

"Hush!" said the same voice, and a hand laid on him restrained him from rising. "It is I, Mahala."

"You here! And what do you know of Wolff and his doings? You are his accomplice: you have met before?"

"Never, never till the night he stole the diamonds," said the ayah.

"He did steal them then?"

"He did."

"And you say he was right to claim the name he did? What would you fool me into believing that this is really Protheroe's nephew? That this is in sober truth, Peter Roydon Palmer?"

"I am sure of it."

Roland rose, and put his hands to his head like a man struck with vertigo.

In his wildest conceptions—he had a wealth of imagination, which made even his crimes romantic—he had never hit on anything so startling as this. It was incredible that he should have proposed to this man of all men to personate—himself!

Certainly, when he thought of it there were peculiar circumstances in the case. This man had always spoken of Protheroe as a name familiar to him. The missing nephew was a wanderer and an outcast on the face of Europe—absolutely described so in the will—and Peter Wolff, as he had chosen to call himself, exactly answered that description. Still the coincidence was more than singular. It was marvellous.

As Roland thought over it, the great drops oozed out upon his brow; his teeth chattered.

The mere suggestion upset all his calculations.

"You have never seen the man, but at the times you describe, and yet you have no doubt of him?" he asked, turning sharply to Mahala.

"No doubt—none."

"And why is that?"

"Because I have heard him described as a boy, and such a boy would have grown into such a man."

"Nonsense! that is not enough."

"It is not all. The real man had a white scar—im-perceptible except in one light—near his right eye. I have heard it described, and know how it came there. A woman threw a knife at him when a child, for he was a provoking dare-devil, even then."

"This man has such a scar—I have seen it," mused the young man.

"Well, then?"

"Doubtless it may be the same, but the proof is feeble—very feeble!" was the answer.

Mahala laid her dark fingers on the arm of the young man.

"You say so because you wish to think it so," she said. "It is to your interest to persuade yourself and the world that Palmer is dead."

"How do you know that—who has told you? Well, well, if I would rather he were dead than alive, what of it? There's no crime in that, is there?"

"None. And there may be very few living who can identify him, since he has wandered over the whole world, as I have heard, under a false name. Very few; and I am one of them!"

The ayah spoke in a significant tone, which gave a peculiar meaning to words which were in themselves neither startling nor significant.

There was a moment's dead silence.

"Have you ever mentioned this—this scar to any one, Mahala?" said the young man, after a time.

"Have you ever suggested that the man you saw at the Towers, and who stole Gertrude's diamonds, was old Protheroe's nephew?"

"Never."

"Then it would not be difficult to you to keep the secret, in case I should not want it talked about. You would do that for me, wouldn't you?"

Dark as it was, Roland saw that the eyes of the ayah flashed with strange brilliance as she raised her face towards his, and, in a half-whisper, said:

"I can prove that this is the man; but I can also lie—Hush! not as these Christians lie, with their crimson cheeks and tell-tale eyes, that make their words a mockery. I can lie as the Hindoo only lies, with tongue, and cheek, and eye, and act; in soul and in heart. Give me my price, and I will swear on your Evangelists that I know the man, and that this is not he!"

"Good!" cried Roland, dropping his voice to a whisper; "and your price—what is it?"

"You will not betray me?"

"My hand on it! But the price?"

Mahala, grasping the hand thus proffered, raised herself, until her mouth was level with the ear of the man who bent toward her, and, there and then, eager and excited, hissed forth certain words in a whisper.

At those words Roland Hershaw recoiled. Bad as he was, the suggestion of the ayah startled him. It was so deliberately, so fiendishly wicked and cruel.

"But it would be Gertrude's ruin!" he muttered.

"Well?"

"And you, her companion, her protector—"

Mahala started away angry, and as if about to quit his side. With eager hands he caught at her loose drapery. The suggestion she had made squared but too well with his own evil devices for it not to be welcome; started as he had been at it from the lips of the ayah.

"Stay, stay!" he cried.

"No. For you love the white soodra! You will make her your wife, and tell her all. I know—I know—"

"Mahala!" exclaimed Roland, seizing both the ayah's hand: "hear me. I accept your condition. Promise me that you will swear that this is not the man he declares himself to be; that you have seen and know the original, and that he differs from him as light from dark, and I will consent to what you ask."

"I swear it upon my amulet!" said Mahala, solemnly, at the same time making a few peculiar passes with her hands over her face and breast. "But see! They are looking for you. Go!"

Then the ayah disappeared so quietly, that Roland believed she must have come to the spot barefooted, and he, nervously excited by what had passed, returned to the ballroom.

His return was eagerly looked for by Gertrude. What had happened had rendered her intensely unhappy. She had looked forward to this evening with the liveliest anticipations, and from the first her hopes seemed doomed to be blighted. There was a mystery about Roland's conduct which made her anxious. More than that, there was a coolness in his manner, such as she had never observed before. And, to crown all, she believed that he had left, after the scene in the ballroom, without even wishing her good-bye.

It was with a glow of delight, therefore, that she saw him re-enter; and though she could not understand why his face was so white, his eyes so wild in their look, it was enough for her that he made directly for the couch on which she was seated, and took his position by her side.

The radiant smiles which broke over her beautiful face became contagious, for, in a short time Roland too was smiling, brilliant, and apparently happy. He talked glibly, and rattled gaily on, as he had done on the night when they had first met. In this way he redeemed all the coldness of the earlier hours. Gertrude was supremely happy. Her eyes glistened, her heart throbbed with unwonted joy. She felt herself on a giddy and perilous height of happiness on which she stood without a shudder.

Yet it was so easy to fall.

Beneath her yawned an abyss of misery—black, hideous, fathomless!

And she stood upon the brink. Happy, so very, very happy.

Ah, yes! for the last time!

CHAPTER XV.

AMY'S LOVER.

All that he dreamt, all that he ever loved,
All that youth's prophecy said "Might have been;"
All the grim shadows of the wasted past,
In dim procession moved before him now.

J. Verrey.

WHILE these events were passing, sorrow rested upon the grim, ghostly old building, the Towers, like a pall.

We call it the supreme moment of the mother's agony when she bends over the dead body of her only child—when the eyes that have overflowed with love and tenderness, stare upward expressionless as eyes of stone—when the pouting lips are cold, the coiling fingers rigid, and when the fervour of passionate entreaty and the cry of heart-rending sorrow is alike indifferent to "the ears that hear not."

But even death has its consolations. The placid brow, the quiet heart, speak of peace and hope; of repose, that even sorrow cannot disturb; of the sleep in which "the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest."

Had they seen their child reposing in the grave, Sir Sydney Robert would not have sorrowed as one without hope, and Lady Agatha would have bowed her head in resignation before the decree of Heaven.

But to lose her!

To see her fall the victim of a calamity as sudden as it was terrible, and then, while yet stunned by that blow, to lose sight even of the wreck of their darling—their idolised Amy—this was a punishment almost too hard for human endurance.

The search they had instituted saved them from utter prostration. The necessity of action had mercifully broken the full force of the blow in the first instance; but as time passed, and not a trace could be found—not a clue to the mystery presented itself, the full, heavy weight of despair settled down upon

their hearts, and threatened to crush out existence itself.

They shut themselves up in the Towers, occupying two rooms only out of the great wilderness of a building; excluding daylight, rejecting food, giving themselves over to the contemplation of the one thought, the melancholy reflection of which robbed the world of light, colour, beauty—everything that had made life endurable.

Their conviction was that the poor child had destroyed herself. It was so difficult to believe that she lived and was lost to them. How much more likely, they argued, that she should have wandered away, and lost herself in the woods, or fallen into the river, or sunk into some quagmire or morass, and perished there? Sometimes, indeed, they had half-fancied that they could detect her fitting form among the ghostly shadows of the old house, and in their dreams they would see her, sad—always inexpressibly sad—but beautiful and angelic.

In the midst of this, their great sorrow, they one day received a letter of foreign appearance, and bearing in the post-mark of "Ravenna."

The sight of it startled them out of their lethargy.

It was a free, joyous, high-spirited letter, running over with health and enjoyment, in which the writer—a youth, be sure, for no man pens such epistles after thirty—spoke of the "awfully jolly" time he was spending on the continent, seeing, and seeing, and ever seeing; beauties, novelties, and world-famous sights breaking upon his gaze at every step, and all ministering to the most intense enjoyment.

"But," he rattled on, "my holiday is coming to a close. I'm beginning to think how I shall break myself into harness. I must work—work! What an absurdity it seems under this sky of heavenly blue, in the midst of this glorious sunshine, and where one's wants are absolutely bounded by a slice of melon and a glass of water. However, there is work to be done, and it is I who must be the doer of it. Ah, but then I have one consolation. I don't come back to a weary path without a flower in it. If I consent to return to the roof of leaden clouds, that you call sky, my sky will be illuminated by its own bright, particular, far-shining star. Amy—Amy! My heart yearns towards her; I am dying—oh! it's true, in spite of all my happiness—dying to look at her sweet face, and to press her darling hand, and to hear again the voice in which she calls me 'Her own!' Her own! Think of it. But not a word to Amy. My coming back must be a surprise. I will pounce upon her when she least expects me, and she will be pleased and angry, and cry and laugh, and scold and welcome me. Oh, 'twill be so jolly! I long for the moment so that it seems to me as if I could never wait for it."

That letter was signed Edward Bruce.

The red fire in the great drawing-room was burning low as Sir Sydney bent down his white face and read the words in a low, mournful tone that jarred painfully with the exhilaration of spirit in which they had been penned. Again and again he paused, tears choking his voice; and it was in the faintest whisper that he read the concluding words that had reference to Amy.

As he ceased, neither he nor his lady spoke for a few seconds.

The silence, resulting from their profound emotion, was broken only by the moaning of the wind in the wide, hollow chimney, and the swaying of the creaking branches of the elms outside the window.

"You must be spared this, Agatha," said Sir Sydney, when he could summon courage to speak.

"Yes, the poor boy! I cannot endure the shock of seeing him, of witnessing his disappointment and agony."

"Our poor child loved him?" asked the baronet.

Lady Agatha shook her head.

"They grew up together as cousins, and Edward became deeply, passionately attached to the dear child. But I cannot say if she returned his passion. I think not. I do not believe her heart ever yielded to the influence of love until Roland Henshaw was introduced to us—an introduction which, from the first, I regarded with a mournful presentiment."

"You did not like him?"

"It is my nature to shrink from secrecy and concealment. The young man is well enough; but there is a mystery about him which displeases me. That he is the son of a political refugee—Russian, Polish, German, I know not which—may be true; but under such pretences men often hide the most objectionable antecedents."

"True!" responded Sir Sydney. "Yet his letters of introduction were most satisfactory. His connections are all first-class. Still, you may be right. But about poor Edward, I will at once write to his father to whom he will of course, first present himself, and prepare him for the calamity which has overwhelmed us."

He ceased speaking abruptly.

There was a sound audible in the quiet place, which

was neither the swaying of the branches, nor the moaning of the wind.

Both listened. And simultaneously the one word escaped their lips.

"Wheels! Who can be coming here to-night?"

Undoubtedly wheels. The grinding of the gravel path that wound through the grounds, under the weight of some vehicle, the clatter of horses' hoofs, the ring of the whip, a rough "was" and then silence.

The next instant a slight footstep sounded in the hall, and on the stairs, the door of the drawing-room was thrown open, and some one entered with a cry of dismay, or disappointment.

"Alone!"

It was a gay, ringing voice that uttered this exclamation, and then the speaker advanced so that the firelight fell upon him, and lighted up his face. A frank, open, pleasant face enough, it was: the face of a very young man, not more than nineteen, certainly, with brown eyes, and clustering curls of the same colour. That he was tall, broad-shouldered, and wore a loose coat lined with sable, was about all that the light revealed in addition.

The disappointment expressed in the one word the youth had uttered was not relieved when he scrutinized the faces of the knight and his lady, who had both risen on his entering.

"Amy not here?" he cried.

"No—" began Sir Sydney.

"And I thought to give her the jolliest surprise! Why, you are crying, both of you? What has happened? Nothing serious?"

"Well, yes, poor Amy—"

"Is dead?"

"No; we hope not; we trust in God she lives."

"What!" cried the youth, who looked from one to the other with a feeling upon him as if he had been stunned. "Amy is not here? Is gone? And you—you don't know whether she is alive or dead?"

It seemed so utterly incredible, that the youth, in his bright, ardent mind, half-persuaded himself that there must be some mistake, that he or those before him must be labouring under some delusion.

Not till he had drawn up his chair, and Sir Sydney had given him a circumstantial account of all that had happened from first to last, did he comprehend the real position of affairs, or fully sympathize with the bereaved parents. When the worst was told, his emotion was intensely painful to witness. He had nurtured the dream of that love during all the months that he had spent in his wandering from place to place. The idea of his sudden return, and of Amy's glad surprise, had been entertained months and months before; and now—what a hideous awakening this from that pleasant dream!

All that evening, and all the long, sleepless night that followed it, he could only ask himself one question—Was it real?—was it true? And ever as he satisfied himself that he was indeed awake, and that Amy was gone from him, the exuberant energy of his nature and his years concentrated itself into a longing for action, and a determination that, living or dead, poor Amy must and should be found.

How to act and what step to take first was the difficulty. But before youth and enthusiasm difficulties vanish, and the grey dawn of the February morning found the youth resolved on one thing. He would go at once to his father. Sir Sydney was wrong in supposing that he had paid him the first visit on reaching England. By a line of argument, with which the heart had far more to do than the head, he had persuaded himself that his shortest and most convenient route lay by the Towers. But now he was resolved to depart at once and to enlist "the old man," as he called him, in his cause without delay.

The greeting of his returned son, by Roderick Bruce, was warm and cordial, nor had his half-sister, the fair Carla, a less ardent welcome for the young man. Both, however, were quick to notice that he returned home with a load upon his spirits, for which his letters had not prepared them.

A few words explained all—words, by the way, which comprised a confession of intense devotion for Amy Robert, for which neither father nor daughter was prepared. On his part, Edward was astonished at the effect which one part of his narrative produced on the old man.

At the mention of Peter Wolf's name, casually and incidentally as connected with the diamond-robbery so soon followed by his more heinous offence, Roderick Bruce turned pale, and a scared look came into his face, the cause of which it was difficult to understand.

"And now," asked Edward, "you have heard all—what do you think? What do you advise?"

The calm eyes of the old man—those eyes that had once flashed as brightly and as restlessly as those of his son—closed for a moment in reflection.

Then he said: "This Peter Wolf is not a common robber."

"You know that?"

"Yes. I have heard of the man. It is possible that, having found his way into a house, he might yield to a momentary impulse to possess himself of a trinket; but he would hardly go there for such a purpose. I think not. I believe not."

"Well?"

"Yet it appears clearly enough that he did commit the robbery. This morning's paper—'tis in my study—states that he has been accused and committed for trial. The evidence, therefore, must be pretty strong as to his taking the diamonds; but that he went for them I do not believe."

"You think then, that he had some hand in carrying off the poor dear child?"

"I think it possible. That is a far more likely inducement to him to have gone to the Towers, and the two crimes were committed about the same time."

"But what could have been his motive?"

"That I cannot tell you. He is a man of strange habits and connections. He may only have acted as a tool in the hands of others."

"But," urged the young man, "a reward, enormous in amount, has been offered by Sir Sydney. Surely that would have tempted such a man to give up his victim?"

"If," was the answer, "she is yet in his power. If some stronger temptation did not move him to keep the secret. Or if again, he could come forward and claim the reward with safety."

"True, true," said Edward; then for a time he sat revolving the old man's words. Presently he started up, "I must see this man," he said.

"Impossible!"

"How so?"

"He is a prisoner; there are no means by which you could gain access to him. Besides, what can you hope to gain from him? He is secret, sullen and more likely to gloat over the pain he is causing you, than to offer to mitigate it."

"Nevertheless, I will see him," said the impetuous youth. "Something may come of it. At least I can venture to offer that the reward will be paid and no questions asked."

Roderick Bruce smiled at the young man's enthusiasm and confidence in his power of carrying his point. Secretly he rejoiced at the misfortune which had overtaken Peter Wolff. The interview of a few evenings before had caused him the most acute mental suffering. He had found himself urged on to the performance of an act at which his soul revolted, an act which he could not feel was in the nature of a grievous crime. While the denouncer was not in a position to give the necessary information, the victim might escape, and he, the proposed guilty agent of a deed of guilt, committed in the sacred name of Liberty, might rest in peace and innocence.

Without understanding the cause, Edward Bruce saw that his father was not desirous of assisting him in gaining the interview with the man.

But the idea having been started, the lad was by no means ready to let it drop, and eventually he succeeded in inducing the other to give him a letter of introduction to the chaplain of the prison in which Peter Wolff awaited his trial. This contained also a request that, if practicable, the chaplain would procure a few minutes' conversation between the bearer and the prisoner named. The letter was signed, and to the signature was added a peculiar hieroglyphic, which belonged to no recognized language.

It was growing dusk in the afternoon, when the chaplain to whom this missive was addressed entered the prison, accompanied by Edward Bruce, who still wore the coat lined with sable, and a broad felt hat, which he had picked up in Italy, and which he considered becoming.

There was some little demur about admitting the stranger, but within the walls of a prison the influence of the chaplain is immense. He does not rank with the governor, but his privileges are quite as great.

So, without much difficulty, the two entered, and walked side by side along the dismal passages which intersected this abode of misery and sin.

It was hard to believe that each of those iron doors which they passed by, and which looked like the entrances to cages of wild beasts, hid from view human beings, each in his or her separate cell, each awaiting with more or less complacency, the chances which were to give them back liberty, glorious liberty, or to give them over to infamy, the stain of which is never washed away in this world.

The face of the lad walking by the grave chaplain's side, was light and fresh, and beautiful with the glow of youth and innocence. There seemed no possible link of harmony between him and the place in which he found himself. And yet the gaolers who challenged them at every turn could, with the turn of a key, have confronted the lad with faces once as bright, as fresh, as radiant with innocence and hope, as little likely to wear the dark stamp of crime, which was now set upon their features like a mask. But it is easy to fall from the

bright pinnacle of goodness; it is so hard, so very hard to regain the footing once lost.

But these thoughts were not in the mind of Edward Bruce.

He was only anxious, feverishly anxious, to be face to face with the man he had come to see, and from whom he was sanguine enough to believe that he should extort the secret of Amy's death—if she was dead; or of her hiding-place, if she had been stolen away to answer some wicked purpose; for that it was wicked he did not doubt. That this outrage should have been the result of the one bright impulse of a dark nature, the one thread of light which redeemed it from utter darkness, it did not enter into the lad's mind to conceive.

The gaoler unlocked the door of the cell, indicated to him and stood respectfully without.

The curate and Edward Bruce passed in.

Upon a bed, formed of a tick full of straw in a sort of trough, sat Peter Wolff, in the evening dress in which he had appeared at Mrs. Larkall's ball, and which, soiled and crumpled, seemed a perfect mockery in that dismal place.

The white face was off, the dress front was in rags and the elegantly-trimmed hair and beard presented the aspect of an ill-made mat.

Upon the table before the prisoner was a book—it was a Bible, and it was open; but Peter Wolff had not been reading.

At any time confinement would have been intolerable to him. He was, as we know, of a restless, wandering disposition. All Europe had hardly satisfied his vagrant propensities. To be free, free as the wind; that was his nature. That had induced him, while yet a mere boy, to leave his native land and to associate himself with a troop of Bohemians, who roved from country to country lawless and unrestrained. After that he had graduated as a brigand—till he one fine morning found himself the inmate of an Italian prison. Thence he had escaped and wandered, and still wandered from land to land, only to return in time to find himself heir to a fortune, from which it was coolly proposed that he should assist in defrauding himself!

This was his offence.

For this, in reality, he was suffering the tortures of days and nights in that hideous den.

Do you think he could read? Do you suppose that the page which spoke of patience, of long-suffering, and the forgiveness of injuries, had any charm to him, any hope of piercing his adamant heart?

No; he neither read, nor slept, nor gave himself rest or peace. He only brooded, and chafed, and grew frantic. He only panted for present liberty, and planned future acts of vengeance, dark, terrible, diabolical.

At the creaking of the door, he looked up sharply.

The chaplain he knew well enough; the other face was strange to him.

"Can I speak a few words to you?" said Edward Bruce, immediately; "they will be very few."

"Not words of his sort," returned the prisoner, pointing with his thumb at the chaplain; "I've had enough of his talk."

"I will leave you, but it must be for a minute only," said the chaplain, addressing the youth, and without heeding the remark directed at himself. He was used to that kind of thing. Seldom, indeed, did his words fall on other than stony ground, and when he appeared to have found a fertile soil, it but too often turned out to be the original granite, with only a "top-dressing" of hypocrisy and dissimulation.

Without another word he quitted the cell.

"I don't come here," said Edward Bruce eagerly, yet timidly, "to speak to you about the offence you are charged with—"

"And of which I'm innocent!" cried the prisoner fiercely.

"I dare say; but—"

"I am, I tell you; you think I only say it; but it's true. I never had the diamonds—never saw 'em. I believe the black girl's the thief; I'd swear it."

"And did she carry off Sir Sydney Robert's daughter?"

"Eh?"

The question was put so quickly that for the moment Peter Wolff started, and turned his fierce eyes upon the inquirer with a savage glare.

"Was it her doing, or was it yours? Don't speak—don't deny it, and brave it out. Hear me, hear what I've got to say. If you know anything of Amy—where she is or why she was carried off—only let me know it, and the reward and more shall be paid to you, or to whoever you like on your behalf, and no questions asked, and not a finger raised against you. I promise it; on my word as a gentleman."

"Ha! ha!" laughed Peter, "I'd take your word my lad before many a man's oath; but it can't rest with you. There are others to be thought of and to be consulted, and your will wouldn't bind them. Besides, I've my own ends to work out."

"It is true, then," said Edward, catching at the one idea of most interest to himself, "that you do know something of this poor girl?"

"I haven't said so," was the answer.

"But you won't deny it? Don't, pray—pray don't deny it!"

Peter Wolff looked at the fresh, young, boyish face with an expression of kindness, almost of pity.

"She was your sweetheart, was she?" he asked.

"I've loved her from a boy," was the response.

"From a boy! Well, that may be, and your heart needn't have ached long either. You're a tall, smart fellow, too—my own height to half an inch—and not twenty, I'll be bound."

"What does it matter?" cried the lad impatiently;

"Suppose I was your age?"

"It would be so much the better."

"Why?"

"Because if you care for this girl—"

"If I care? I love her. I doat on her. I would do anything, suffer anything for her sake."

"Would you? I thought so, and that made me say that it would be better if your age and mine agreed nearer than they do."

"I don't understand you," said the youth stepping back, the better to take in the expression of his companion's face.

Upon that face there was a peculiar expression. A light twinkled in his eyes, the mouth was puckered with a half-smile; it was evident that the man was impressed with a sudden idea, which afforded him immense enjoyment.

"Listen," said Peter, "I won't say either that I did or did not help to carry off this girl. But I know where she is."

"She lives, then?"

"She does, and I can take you to her. But to take you I must get out of this. That you'll say is easier said than done; but you can help me to do it."

"I can?"

"Yes. Suppose I left you here in this cell, senseless, and walked out in your clothes—I say suppose that—they'd soon release you, wouldn't they?"

"Yes, but—"

"And suppose I went, and you shammed it? I tell you that if you come to-night to where I'll tell you, or to-morrow, or whenever you get free, I'll show you the girl, Amy—you see I know her name—light-haired, blue-eyed, and at this moment wandering in her mind—that's the description, isn't it? I swear to you that I'll do this."

Edward Bruce listened at first with the utmost reluctance. But the man was not to be turned from his purpose; and he speedily offered arguments, which induced compliance with his wishes.

It was about ten minutes after that the chaplain returned, with slow, measured tread along the stone passage.

The gaoler taking advantage of the conversation going on in Wolff's cell, had opened the door of another, adjoining it, and was holding an angry conversation with its ruffianly inmate.

As the chaplain drew near, the figure of his young friend presented itself in the dim light—there was the Italian hat and the sable-lined coat. The wearer was in the act of bidding the prisoner good-night.

"Thank you, again, and again."

"You're very welcome, sir. Good-night."

The chaplain heard these words. He could distinguish the voices of the speakers.

Then the wearer of the coat and hat came out, using a white pocket-handkerchief, which concealed his face for the moment.

"Your prisoner, Sims," said the chaplain, addressing the gaoler, who thereupon looked back out of the cell into which he was stooping.

"Ay, ay, sir," he answered.

Then the chaplain and his companion walked away. They had but little conversation as they went, for the young man appeared deeply moved by what had taken place in the cell, and sobbed audibly more than once, applying the handkerchief to his eyes as he did so.

That was always, as the chaplain afterwards recollected, as they passed a light or came to a gaoler.

So in time they reached the portal of the prison and went out side by side. From the gate they had to pass over a narrow stone bridge, spanning a dry moat. The parapet on either side was about three feet in height.

Directly the prison gate closed behind them with a clang, the handkerchief which his companion had used so much was adroitly passed over the chaplain's mouth and nostrils, so as to form an effective gag, and fastened behind his ears, with a hard knot prepared beforehand.

At the same moment the chaplain was tripped up and sent backwards over the parapet into the moat.

Then the wearer of the slouched Italian hat and sable-lined coat, walked quietly away.

(To be continued.)

THE SALT MONOPOLY IN INDIA.—According to an official Indian report, by Mr. Plowden on the salt monopoly, published in 1856, it appears that the Indian consumption in different localities was, in maunds of about 82½ lb. each, in Bengal, 7,000,000; in Bombay, 2,900,000; in Madras, 5,000,000; in the North-west provinces, 2,260,000; and in the Punjab, 1,000,000. In all, 18,160,000 maunds, or more than 684,000 tons. But what is this quantity, even with the imports added, to the millions of population of our great Indian dependency, to whom, with their vegetable food, salt is such a necessary? The salt duty, a few years ago, brought in a revenue of about two millions sterling to the Indian government. It is to be hoped that some more legitimate tax may be found than this very, very heavy tax on food to a poor population. Surely, with an improving revenue, the salt monopoly in India may be abolished, and the trade in salt thrown generally open to British commerce.

MAKING A GOOD CATCH.

DARKNESS was fast falling over a little village on one midsummer eve. Two maidens were sitting on a rustic seat, beneath a huge old elm-tree on the little public square. One, Emily Ellerton, was tall, fair, with a haughty mien and flashing eye, proud and handsome, the village belle; the other, a quiet, gentle maiden, named Julia Brown.

"Emily, you seem to have lovers in abundance."

"Aye, the more the merrier. 'Tis fine sport."

"It may be no sport for them. Some of them may love you in earnest; and the whole-souled love of an honest, upright man should not be trifled with; you may repent your sport ere many years."

"Quite a lecture, Julia. Now, who of all my lovers as you call them, and as they call themselves, do you suppose will take a little flirting to heart?"

"Well, Marvin Royce, for instance. He has danced attendance upon you faithfully since his return home; and rumour says he was a lover of yours before he went away. Now, would you marry him?"

"No; I have no intention of marrying him; he is not able to support me as I should wish to live. If he had brought back a mint of the gold dust, well, I might, for he is a fine, handsome fellow, and good company."

"Why, then, do you encourage his attentions?"

"Oh, I like to walk or ride with him, for he is an agreeable companion; and a miner cannot be very tender-hearted."

"Who was that handsome individual I saw you riding with this morning?"

"That was the Count Rudolph?"

"Count Rudolph! And pray who may his lordship be?"

"Oh, he is an Hungarian."

"And do you aspire to be a countess?"

"Stranger things have happened. The count is of noble ancestry—a brave defender of his country—handsome, and altogether a desirable man—a good catch."

"But, being an exile, he may not have those golden charms you miss in Marvin Royce?"

"I mean to ascertain. At all events he lives at the hotel in costly style. Now, you have catechised me so well, it is my turn. How many despairing lovers have you?—whose hearts are you breaking?"

"None. If I had a lover I should not trifle with him."

"Well, well, no tales out of school, Julia. I must pursue my walk. I see the count coming yonder; so good-bye, and away sped the capricious belle."

Scarcely had she departed when a manly form leaped from the tree, and stood, with flushed face and somewhat excited manner, before Julia.

"Oh, Marvin Royce, where did you drop from?"

He pointed to a seat formed in the limbs of the tree.

"I thought not you would play the listener!"

"Pardon me. By heavens, I had no intention of playing the spy. I climbed up there two hours ago to enjoy the evening breeze, and fell into a slumber over my paper, from which I was aroused by your voices, and hearing my name, could not but listen, and glad I am to have learned the heartlessness of Emily. Nay, do not arise to go, Julia; I have something more to say; the sentiments you have uttered, and your quiet, gentle beauty, of which I was ever sensible, prompt me to a declaration. I was informed, when I arrived home, that you had a lover; now I have heard you say your heart is free. If you will accept the love of one who will ever be true to you, you shall no longer say you have no lover."

Julia turned a searching glance, and a countenance alternately pale and red to his.

"Ah, I see you do not believe in sudden love! I do. But we have ever known each other in our youthful days; and I have dreamed of a happy home with you when far away in the mountains. Let my

day-dreams be fulfilled—let me seal our love with a kiss."

And their lips met in the sweet pledge—but let us leave them to their converse, of which we shall learn more anon.

But a little while elapsed ere it became known that Marvin Royce had purchased the Pendleton estate—a large farm, with five cottages, carriages, stock, &c. Madame Rumour began to report that he had brought home fifty thousand pounds after all—had only been keeping quiet about it.

A visible change came over the manner of Emily Ellerton—her sunniest smiles and most pointed attentions were lavished on Marvin Royce, whose presence whenever they met, cast her other lovers in the shade.

Marvin seemed charmed by the siren's voice, and the heart of the belle beat fast in the expectation of soon bringing the "good catch" to a proposal.

Thus passed August and September. Marvin mingled but little in the pic-nics and excursions of the summer season, being busied on his new estates.

One day, early in October, when the weekly paper arrived, Emily seized it, and glancing at that column, always first consulted, read:

"Married—Aug. 1, Marvin Royce to Miss Julia Brown."

She did not faint by any means; that would have been useless display, as there was no one to behold the affecting scene or apply restoratives, but there was a fierce scowl and uttering of harsh invectives, a few tears, not of sorrow, but mortification and rage; then she put on her sunniest smile, her richest robes, and sallied out to promenade, and meeting the Count Rudolph, cheered that "good catch" with a sunny welcome.

In a week she had eloped with the count, who, by the way, was a bogus count, once a French barber, and the proprietor of a bear and oyster saloon, where the dashing Emily soon found no alternative but submission to her lot, and preparing oyster suppers for riotous patrons.

Need we add that the brave Hungarian exile had thought from her dress, and residence with a rich and kind gentleman, who had given her a support in her early orphan years, that she was an heiress. Well, such is life!

WOMAN AND HER MASTER.

By J. F. SMITH, Esq.

Author of "The Jesuit," "The Pretate," "Minnigrey," &c.

CHAPTER LXI.

WHEN Mabel rejoined her daughter, she found her exceedingly pale, and the long, silken lashes of her eyelids gummed with tears.

"No ill news," inquired the anxious mother, "of your friends?"

"None! All that I love, I trust, are well!"

"And yet you have been weeping! Surely one whose manner appeared so kind and respectful—even to me—cannot willingly have given you pain?"

"He! Oh, no!" replied Margaret, with a burst of grateful feeling. "He is the most noble, as well as the most generous of men! Do not question me!" she added. "You shall one day know all!"

Ned Cantor did not return to Borderclough till the evening of the following day. He was in unusual spirits, and displayed with no little ostentation a selection of gaudy silks and satins, which he had purchased at Carlisle.

"There, Meg!" he said, pointing to them with an air of satisfaction; "they are for you—all for you! Your fine friends shan't say that you are worse dressed beneath my roof, than when dependent upon their care!"

"All for me!" repeated his daughter, at the same time casting a look of affection towards her mother.

"Your father has not forgotten me, darling!" hastily answered Mabel, pointing to a parcel which remained unopened.

"Thank you, father!" said his daughter, advancing towards him, and presenting her cheek for him to kiss.

She did this more readily, because she felt that for once she had been unjust towards him. At any other period of her life she would have smiled at the idea of appearing in such flaunting colours as Ned had selected for her use—although, in her present mood, she scarcely noticed them. Fortunately there were one or two simple morning dresses, which had been thrown in by the mercer as a bargain, with the rest of the merchandise.

"And now," said the delighted Ned—for this time the caress of his child had appeared voluntary—"let us have some supper, wife."

Mabel was about to quit the room, to prepare the evening meal, when her daughter begged her to remain.

"It is not fitting," he said, "that you should wait upon me."

"But she don't mind it!"

"But I do, father!" answered Margaret. "That my mother should serve you, may be right; but I cannot permit her to act as servant to her own child!"

Ned felt the reproof. Probably it was the first time in his life he had ever received one without resenting it. He bit his lips, and accepted it in silence; but he mentally resolved that the first thing he did on the following morning should be to engage a domestic for Borderclough.

When Mabel returned to conduct her daughter to her chamber, instead of remaining with her—as she had done on the previous nights—a considerable time, she betrayed a nervous impatience to descend. It was her wish to explain to her husband the cause of her absence from home, before his present good-humour had entirely evaporated.

With a kiss and hasty blessing she left her, as she hoped, to repose.

"It is evident," thought Margaret, "that she fears my father! Alas! what a life of sorrow does that one word 'fear' disclose!"

She began slowly to remove the combs from her luxuriant hair, which fell in natural ringlets over her shoulders.

Her thoughts next reverted to Sir Cuthbert Sinclair, and the generous offer he had made her—an offer which gave her a terrible power of punishing the heartless conduct of her lover. But the poor, affectionate girl felt no resentment: her only feelings were those of regret at his unworthiness.

Suddenly she paused and listened. The sound of her father's voice, high in anger, was distinctly heard in the room below, followed by the plaintive tones of Mabel.

Impelled by a suspicion which she could scarcely acknowledge to herself, Margaret opened the door and listened. She was convinced; and, without waiting to readjust her disordered tresses, descended the stairs with the rapidity of a guardian angel flying to the succour of its charge in danger.

When Mabel descended to the supper-room, she found Ned smoking his pipe. It would have been easy to have concealed from him her transgression of his commands; but her naturally pure mind shrank at the practice of deceit.

"Well," he muttered; "you have not been lonely this time. I suppose you and Meg have had plenty to talk about."

His wife perfectly understood the suspicion his words conveyed, and she hastened to reassure him.

"Margaret has been writing," she replied.

"Indeed! To whom?"

"To her friends, Ned—the kind friends who loved and protected her."

Her husband replied with a dissatisfied "humph!" and added, "that he did not want his child to be writing to any one who would teach her to despise her father. But there is no great harm done," he continued, "where are the letters?"

"Gone."

"Gone!" he repeated, his eyes flashing fury. "Why, you don't mean to say that you have been fool enough to allow her to send them?"

"I have, Ned," answered Mabel; what could I do? She insisted upon posting them, and so I thought—"

A bitter oath interrupted her explanation.

"Well," said the ruffian; "go on. What did you think?"

"Rather than she should go alone to the village, that it was better I should accompany her."

The hand of her husband fell upon the shrinking form of his unhappy wife. It was raised a second time, when the door was opened, and Margaret, like an accusing angel, glided between Ned and his victim. There was neither fear nor hesitation in her manner. Even the eyes of Ned fell beneath the withering scorn and contempt of her fixed gaze.

"Ruffian!" she said; "it is my mother."

The wretched man knew not what to say. The hope of winning the love of his child faded from his heart that instant.

"Leave us, Margaret," sobbed Mabel; "pray leave us!"

"You are right, answered her daughter; "let us leave him."

"What!" murmured Ned, "am I to be braved in my own house, and by my own flesh and blood, too?" "Why have I been brought here," demanded the high-spirited girl, "to witness scenes like these? Is this the home of love you promised me? Ay, threaten," she added, "strike me, if you will—the cowardly blow you levelled at my mother—my good and suffering mother—fell upon my heart. I shall not feel the second."

"Strike you!" answered her father; "never—never!"

"And why not?" coolly demanded his child; "you have raised your hand against one who ought to be as

dear to you—against one who in your absence urged me to forget your past shame, and strive to love you! I began to imagine that I could do so, but you have destroyed the feeling in my breast for ever!"

"Forgive him!" whispered Mabel; "he was angry, and—"

"Angry!" repeated her daughter; "and could he find no other object to vent his unmanly spleen upon than a woman? To strike you—you whose pure and upright heart has been crushed by his sin and shame—the patient, suffering angel whose virtues might have reclaimed a fallen spirit's wanderings—you, who—"

The overwrought excitement of the poor girl suddenly gave way—her eyes became fixed, and she fell in a fit at the feet of the parent she loved and had defended.

"You have killed her!" exclaimed the broken-hearted mother; "you have killed my child!"

Ned was like a madman. He alternately cursed his wife, and implored her forgiveness; passionately entreated his daughter to forgive him, and then reproached her for her obstinacy, as he termed it.

The heart of woman is never so strong as when the objects of her affection require aid.

Oh, woman, in our hours of ease,
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,
But when affliction wrings the brow,
A ministering angel thou!

"Assist me to carry her to her chamber, Ned!" said his wife.

The strong man trembled like a child as he raised the senseless form of his daughter in his arms, and staggered with her up the winding staircase, followed by Mabel.

"Place her on the bed."

He did so. Remorse and terror had completely subdued him. He wept over her, and bitterly cursed the headstrong passion which had so nearly deprived him of her for ever.

More than an hour elapsed before the sufferer was restored to anything like approaching consciousness; and when she did recover, it was to throw her arms around the form of her mother, who was anxiously bending over her, and declare that she would protect her.

"No one will harm me now!" sobbed the grateful Mabel.

Margaret's eye fell upon her father, who stood wringing his hands at the foot of the bed. With a scream which awoke the long-silent echoes of the old mansion, she relapsed into a state of insensibility. Ned was compelled to quit the room. Mabel remained with her daughter during the rest of the night; but long before morning the object of her affection and solicitude was in a raging fever.

"I shall lose her!" murmured the broken-hearted woman; "God has restored me my treasure, only to feel its value by the loss!"

CHAPTER LXII.

Oh, never is the path we tread
So drear, but if we upward gaze,
The favouring smiles of heaven will shed
Some solace for our darkest days. *Bosch.*

We need not remind our readers that the life of Mabel had been one continual course of self-sacrifice and suffering. Her childhood had been embittered by the harsh treatment and crimes of her uncle—as a wife, she had been the victim of a husband's brutality; but in the midst of all her sufferings, one powerful support had not been withdrawn from her—the strength derived from prayer.

How sweet and consoling were the words of affection which her child, even in her wildest wanderings, repeatedly addressed to her, calling her dear, kind mother. The first ray of returning reason manifested itself in the eyes of the sufferer as she gazed upon the pale features of the being who night and day had watched over her. But it was long—very long—before the medical attendant, who had been brought from Haddington, ventured to pronounce her out of danger.

The remorse of Ned, while it lasted, was a strong and bitter feeling; but as the hope of saving his child became a certainty, his better feelings gradually subsided to indifference; "the still, small voice" was no longer heard—or, what was worse, when heard was not attended to.

From the first dawn of Margaret's convalescence, he paid his usual visits of an evening to the parlour of the Moretown Arms, and began assiduously to cultivate the acquaintance of Frank Hazleton. The young man met his advances more than half-way, for he felt anxious to learn something of the beautiful girl who had attracted his attention in the village.

One evening, when they were seated by themselves, like a dexterous sportsman, he began beating the ground by observing that his neighbour must find it very lonely residing at Bordercleugh.

"Not so lonely as you imagine," was the reply.

"True, you have your servants; but they are no society for a man who has travelled and seen so much of the world as you appear to have done."

Ned winced: he did not like any allusions to his travels.

"It must be delightful," continued the speaker, "to visit foreign lands."

"Pretty well," answered his companion, drily; "but wouldn't you think it much more delightful to sit by the chimney-nook with a pretty girl for your wife?"

"And where am I to find one suited to my tastes and feelings?" inquired the young man, earnestly. "The winter I passed in Edinburgh, with my uncle, who is one of the town ministers, has completely unsuited me for any of the girls hereabout."

"Perhaps not."

Frank opened his eyes and began to think that Ned was pumping him.

"A set of awkward dowdies," he said.

"You have not seen them all: there is my daughter, for instance."

"What!" exclaimed the young farmer, thrown completely off his guard by the unmistakable hint, "is that lovely girl at Bordercleugh your child?"

"Whose else should she be?" demanded Ned Cantor; "but how the deuce did you know that she was so lovely?"

His new acquaintance candidly explained the occasion on which he had seen her.

"And you have not forgotten her—eh?"

"Forgotten her!" repeated Frank; "who that has once seen her could forget her? She crossed my path like a sunbeam: appeared like a spring flower in the midst of winter! Adam might sooner have forgotten the last glimpse of the paradise he lost, than I the recollection of the one I would give life and soul to win."

"You really love her, then?" observed Ned, with an approving smile.

"I know not, Mr. Cantor, whether the confession of my presumptions folly will displease you; but truth and plain dealing have ever been my motto. Were I to dissemble in words, my actions would give the lie to them. I do!"

His companion stretched his hand across the table, and grasped that of the speaker, warmly.

"I am glad of it," he said; "heartily glad of it. 'Win her and wear her,' as the old song goes. Meg might make a wealthier match—even a noble one!" he added, in his usual boasting vein; "but I'll have no upstart fellow for a son-in-law, who would look down with contempt upon her parents. I have, all my life, been a plain man, and like plain people."

"It was settled that Frank and Bell Hazleton should call at Bordercleugh the following morning, in order to be introduced to Margaret. Ned wished him to bring his sister with him, in order to render the visit more acceptable to his daughter."

Some of the farmers and rustic neighbours coming into the little parlour, conversation became general, and the evening was passed, as usual, in discussing the politics of the village, and the prospects of the approaching harvest.

Although Margaret had sufficiently recovered from her illness to quit her room, her pale cheek and attenuated form bore witness of the ravages which the fever had made. The fearful state of excitement had passed away, or only manifested itself in a glance or start when her father entered the room. She tried to repress it, but could not always succeed.

The convalescent was seated at the window of the lower room, inhaling the breeze which came laden with the perfume of the heather and wild flowers from the moor, when Frank Hazleton and his sister were announced. Ned shook him warmly by the hand, and introduced them to Mabel and his daughter.

"We have heard," stammered the young farmer, "that Miss Cantor has been ill, and my sister thought that the produce of the farm or dairy might be acceptable."

Bell Hazleton, like most of her sex, possessed far more tact than her brother. When feeling and delicacy are necessary, women are immeasurably superior to men. Whilst the young farmer stood stammering and muttering his set speech, like a great schoolboy not quite certain of his lesson, his sister had quietly taken a chair next Margaret's and placed a bouquet of her choicest flowers in her hand. They were fresh as the young heart which offered them; and when the merry, good-natured girl saw the smile upon the pale, thin lips of the invalid, as she received them, she no longer regretted having sacrificed her choicest geraniums on the occasion.

The little gift broke the ice of formality between them. Margaret looked into the sparkling hazel eyes of her visitor, and read kindness and sympathy there. She felt convinced that she should like her.

And Bell Hazleton was a girl to be liked: her features, although far from being regular, possessed that sunny, joyous expression which attracts the heart more readily than cold and statue-like beauty. In person she

was tall—perhaps too tall for a woman; but she carried her height gracefully, and, whether at the village-church, the dance, or at the farm, superintending the labours of the dairy, the sons of the neighbouring farmers saw the rustic beauty, the impression was the same—all admired, and several strove to win her.

It was not without some persuasion that Frank had induced his sister to accompany him to Bordercleugh.

"She will only laugh at me—this fine London-bred lady—with my simple country ways!" she urged, in reply to his entreaties. "How can I talk to her?"

"As you do to me, Bell!" answered her brother; "beautiful and accomplished as Miss Margaret is, those who love you need not blush to see you by her side."

"If you begin to flatter, positively I won't go!"

"Besides," added the young man, "she has been ill—very ill—and has no friend or companion of her own age in the gloomy old mansion of Bordercleugh."

"Ill!" said Bell, in a tone of sympathy, "in that lonely place? Only wait till I have set the cheese, and told Janet what to prepare for the labourers' dinner, and I'll go. But remember, it depends how she behaves, whether I repeat my visit. If she is a proud, upstart, conceited London miss, she is no companion or friend for Bell Hazleton; and, after all, Frank, adored the merry girl, with an arch smile, 'why do you take such an extraordinary interest in the matter?'"

"Because—because I—I—I know her father!" stammered Frank.

"So you do a dozen fathers, to whose daughters you have never thought it worth while to introduce me; There, don't colour up and look so sheepish!" she continued, with a joyous laugh; "I know that inflammable thing you call your heart has taken fire again, for—let me see—is it the fifth or sixth time, Frank?"

It was in vain that the young farmer denied the accusation—protesting that all his previous affairs of the heart had been mere flirtations. Bell compelled him to admit the justice of her charge, before she would quit the room to prepare for their walk.

The result was the visit to Bordercleugh we have described.

"And are you fond of flowers?" inquired the rustic beauty, as she took the thin, delicate hand of Margaret in hers.

"Oh, yes! I have lived all my life amongst them."

"Then you were not brought up in London?"

"I only passed a few weeks there!" replied the invalid; "and wish to heaven I had never seen it! Living in London is like existence in a whirlwind: it confuses the senses, and in time, I should fear, would blunt the heart. Not that that should always be considered as a misfortune!" she added, with a sigh.

On the young farmer being named to her, Margaret had noticed him merely by a slight inclination of the head; but with his sister she conversed with freedom. Poor Frank! he felt terribly disappointed! Doubtless, in the sublime simplicity of his nature, he expected the young lady to make his acquaintance—forgetting that he had come to make hers; but men—especially when they really are, or only fancy themselves in love—are such unreasonable beings.

There is no boxing tact into the head of a lover: it is like a game at cross purposes—the attempt is either stupid or ridiculous.

Bell saw her brother's uneasiness; and although secretly pleased at his embarrassment, which she considered a useful lesson—for the young farmer was slightly addicted to coquetting—like a kind sister, she tried to put an end to it.

"Come here, Frank," she said, beckoning him to her, "and assist me to persuade Miss Cantor to visit us at the farm—it is much more sheltered than this bleak place—which would give me the horrors!" she added, with a frankness which made poor Margaret smile; "it is so stately and gloomy!"

The suitor faltered on something in which the words "honour" and "pleasure" were alone distinguishable.

"Honour and pleasure!" repeated Bell; "is that the way to induce a young lady to visit us? Tell her that we will endeavour to make it a cheerful home for her—that she will be only a sister more in the house!"

Frank coloured to the temples, whilst the speaker continued to rally him in the same strain.

"Look at him!" she said; "who would imagine that he had passed a whole season in Edinburgh, whilst I have never been further than Carlisle and Newcastle? 'Do come!' she added; 'I shall be so delighted to show you my dairy—it is reckoned the best in the country-side; and I have such a nice lot of doves and poultry!'"

"You are good—very good!" answered Margaret, gratefully; "but I have neither the strength nor spirits at present to quit my home; besides, it would be unkind: it is only very lately that I have returned to my dear mother and to my father!" she added,

noticing the scowl upon the brow of Ned, whose jealousy quickly noticed the distinction.

"Well, then, soon—very soon?" urged Bell.

The invalid avoided a direct promise, and the visitors soon afterwards took their leave.

"What do you think of her, Bell?" inquired her brother, as they drove down the winding road towards the village.

"That she is a nice, dear, good girl," replied the rustic beauty; "without the least pride or affectation. I am sure that I could love her dearly!"

"As a sister?" said the young man.

Bell nodded in the affirmative, and for some minutes appeared buried in reflection.

"Frank," she said, after a pause, "tell me truly, do you really and truly love Margaret Cantor?"

"Dearly and truly!"

"And this is not one of your wild, fly-away passions? There, don't look so indignant; remember how you raved about Fanny Curling!"

"You know that she proved a flirt!" replied her brother.

"But Rachel, you were no less taken with her, and she was no flirt, Frank; then there was your cousin Harriet, and—"

It is impossible to say how far the list would have extended, had not the young farmer cut short her speech by declaring, in a serious tone, that till he had seen Margaret he had never really known what love meant; and added, that his happiness depended upon obtaining her for a wife.

"I am sorry—very sorry for it!" answered his sister, kindly.

"Sorry! Why so?"

"Because I am convinced that she loves some one else!"

The cheek of her brother grew pale, then suddenly flushed at the ill-omened words.

"Did she tell you so?" he asked.

"Tell me so!" repeated the warm-hearted girl, who felt deeply interested in the happiness of her only brother; "of course she did not; but do you think I have neither eyes nor tact? Why she never once looked at you; and I'll be bound could not tell, if I were to return and ask the question, whether your hair is red or black!"

"But her father wishes it!"

"How do you know?"

"He told me so. I am sure of his consent!"

"You had much better have been sure of his daughter's!" replied Bell, who did not altogether approve of Ned Cantor's unceremonious manner of disposing of Margaret's hand.

"Be careful, Frank; if you have the good fortune to win her, make a good husband; for she is like one of those rare flowers of which you brought me the shoots from Edinburgh—the last neglect or word of unkindness, and you would lose her!"

From that day Frank Hazleton was a regular visitor at Borderleigh; his sister sometimes accompanied him. Margaret received them both, if not with pleasure, at least with kindness, for she felt grateful for their attention. Little did the poor girl dream of the hopes which brought the young farmer to her side. Had she suspected them, her manner would have been more decided.

CHAPTER LXIII

There's something in a noble boy,
A brave, free-hearted, careless one,
With his uncheck'd, unhidden joy,
His dread of books and love of fun;

And in his clear and ruddy smile,
Unshaded by a thought of guile,
Unrepressed by sadness,
Which brings to me my childhood back,
As if I trod its very track,
And felt its very gladness.

Some time had elapsed since the decision of a jury had pronounced the wife of the Earl of Moretown insane; but, although Mr. Brindly had made several attempts to see her—and even applied to the Chancellor for his authority to do so—the influence of the earl, backed by the medical certificates, had baffled him.

The peer, on his side, had been equally disappointed in his endeavours to discover the retreat of his lost son. An impenetrable veil seemed to have been drawn between them; the steps of the wealthy goldsmith and his assistant had been watched—spies set around the house—but all to no purpose—not the slightest clue was to be detected.

His lordship and Mr. Quirk were alike baffled in their calculations.

No sooner did Mr. Brindly hear of the imprisonment of the last-named personage, upon the double charge of felony, and aiding the escape of Ned Cantor from justice, than he resolved to carry into execution a plan which had long been nearest to his heart; still it was not without great consideration that he came to the decision.

"Goliath," he said, addressing his assistant, "I have made up my mind to quit London for a few days!"

The young man had no occasion to ask where his master was going—for by this time there was no concealment between them.

"You must be careful sir!" he said; "the German refiner was here again this morning!"

"Fieldbash?"

"Yes, sir."

Fieldbash was the name of a German Jew, whom the speaker suspected—and not without good reason—of being the principal spy employed to watch their proceedings. The fellow was continually calling, under pretext of selling gold-dust, broken articles of plate, and antique jewellery—such as the goldsmith dealt in.

Being a man of plausible manners and conversation, he had at first partially succeeded in obtaining the confidence of Goliath, till the drift of his inquiries put the grateful fellow upon his guard.

"And what did he bring?" inquired his master, with a sigh.

"A curious Indian chain, and some white and gold enamelled settings, from which the stones, as usual, had been taken!"

The above conversation had taken place in the counting-house, from which—as we previously had occasion to observe—everything was visible that transpired in the shop.

"There he is again!" whispered the speaker. "Dear sir, for your own sake, as well as the dear boy's, be prudent!"

He left the room to attend upon the unwelcome customer, followed by Mr. Brindly.

"Well, Mr. Fieldbash," said the young man, "what is it?"

"Goot Mister Goliath, mine fery gootten friend!" exclaimed the Jew, in a strong German accent; "I haf come to ask one fery great obligations!"

The goldsmith was all attention.

"Do speak plainly!" said the assistant, impatiently.

"Haf you melted the teetle articles I sold you dis morning?"

"You know we have not!" replied Goliath. "Do you suppose," he added, with no little degree of pride, "that in an establishment like ours we melt every parcel of goods which comes to hand. We have our regular days!"

Mr. Brindly hastily wrote a few words on the open page of the day-book.

The Jew looked excessively disappointed.

"Will you do me the obligations," he said, "to let me haf dem back again. I can get more money to send dem to Holland. I am a poor man—fery poor!" he added, "and must make honest pennies when I can!"

"Goliath," said his master, as the young man was about to quit the shop for the melting-room, in search of the articles which his customer seemed so anxious to recover, "see what you have left upon the day-book. I am shocked at your carelessness. That is not the way to remain in my employ."

So saying, with affected anger, the old gentleman returned to the counting-house. As he anticipated, the astonished assistant instantly referred to the book, and read:

"The man must not have the things. Put him off, if possible, without exciting his suspicion!"

"Tut, tut!" muttered the young man, in a tone of vexation; "how could I have been so stupid!"

"Anything de matter?" inquired the Jew.

"A mistake of—but it does not concern you! I cannot look for your things now—you must call in the morning!"

His visitor looked terribly disappointed—but Goliath, without appearing to notice him, busied himself in examining the various entries in the book.

"Vat time?"

"As soon as you like—but don't plague me now. I have sold a diamond bracelet for a hundred less than cost price. It may cost me my situation. How could I have made such an error? I suppose I must pay for it!"

"And very right, too!" thought the spy, as he left the shop.

No sooner was he gone, than Goliath was joined by his master.

"Don't close the book!" said the latter. "The fellow is standing behind the carriage opposite, watching us! He can't hear what we say—but he can see us!"

The very animated conversation which ensued, to all appearance had reference to the books. They were turned over, page after page, an invoice looked out, and compared with an entry in the ledger.

"That will do!" said the goldsmith. "The fellow is convinced! We have deceived him! He is gone!"

"And for what purpose has this scene been acted?" inquired the young man, respectfully.

"To lure him here in the morning. The property he is so anxious to recover, I pledge my life, has been stolen!"

The experienced trader was right in his suspicions. When the respectable Mr. Fieldbash called at the shop, according to appointment, in the morning, instead of receiving back the chain and settings, as he anticipated, he was introduced to a gentleman well known in the City, named Ferrester, who was so pressing in his invitation for his company at the Mansion House, that the Jew found it impossible to refuse him.

From the Mansion House he was transferred to Newgate, upon the charge of receiving stolen goods.

The same night the worthy goldsmith, relieved of his worst fears, left London, on a visit to his old acquaintance Captain Vernon.

The captain was one of those men who are alike an ornament to their profession and humanity. He was kind, firm, and honourable. At an early age he had incurred his family estate to a large amount, to pay the debts of an improvident father. Although a strict disciplinarian, he was idolised by his crew. In the bosom of his family he was mild and gentle as a child—the voice of command was never heard there.

He was seated with his wife in the breakfast-room at Vernon Lodge, waiting for the children, when Mr. Brindly was announced. We need not say that he welcomed the old man warmly, for he had not forgotten his disinterested conduct, when the Earl of Moretown, contrary to the implied stipulation existing between himself and the old miser, Nicholas Arden, had called in the mortgage, during his absence from England upon service.

Ample had the grateful sailor since repaid it.

"You are indeed most welcome!" he said; "I knew of no one whose presence could have afforded me greater satisfaction."

"Now you will have no objection, Richard," observed his wife, with a smile, "to send for the children. He quite spoils them, Mr. Brindly," she added; "we have been waiting breakfast for them this half-hour, but he would not have them interrupted at their play. Since his return I have lost all control over them!"

"Poor things!" answered her husband, good-humouredly; "it is not often that I can be with them, and I like to make my presence a holiday. Besides," he added, "they repay me with their affection and confidence: they have never any little scheme on hand that I am not consulted upon. The fact is, I am as great a child as the rest!"

The eyes of his visitor glistened—the feeling of gratitude became almost painful to him. The thought that his poor little godson had found a home of love and kindness, instead of being subjected to the harshness of his father and the cruelty of the governess, drew tears into his aged eyes.

"Bless you, Captain Vernon!" he said. "Bless you," he added, "for your kindness to my boy—and you, too, my dear madam!"

He wrung a hand of each.

"Pshaw!" said the captain; "I loved him at first for your sake—the dear little fellow! but now it is for his own."

Before the speaker had consented to receive the son of the unhappy Alice as an inmate of his family, Mr. Brindly had been compelled to explain to him his motives, and prove to him that his design in secluding him from his father was a just one; for, though comparatively poor, the gallant sailor would have scorned an unworthy or equivocal action, to have been made Lord High Admiral. Once satisfied on that point, he had entered heart and soul into the arrangement.

The door of the breakfast-room was pushed open, and three lovely children came bounding into the room. The first was a fine lad of about nine years of age—a fair, curly-haired little fellow, with blue eyes and a frank, open countenance. It was the eldest son of the captain.

The second was a girl two years his junior—a little, fairy, dark-eyed thing, resembling her mother. She drew back when she perceived a stranger.

The third was the goldsmith's godson, Digby Moretown; but known at the Lodge as Fred Vernon. He passed as a nephew of the captain, and had almost forgotten that he had ever answered to any other name.

When Mr. Brindly saw his cheeks no longer pale and sickly, but redolent of health and exercise, he could no longer restrain his impatience. Clapping him in his arms, he sobbed over him, and asked him if he had forgotten his poor old godfather.

"No!" exclaimed the boy, his countenance beaming with grateful recollection, at the same time kissing away his tears; "nor mamma!" he added, in a lower tone, "my own dear mamma! I see her pale face every night, as she used to watch and cry over me!"

At the sight of her cousin's tears little Annie began to cry, too; and she wanted to know who the old man was who made Freddy—as she called him—so sorrowful.

It was a happy day at Vernon Lodge. The gold-

smith passed nearly all his time with the children. Dick, the captain's son, insisted upon showing him the boat which Jack Breeze—an orphan lad, whom his father had taken to sea—had made for him. Little Annie took him to visit her birds and guinea-pigs, and Digby the pony which his papa—as he called the captain—had bought him.

"And have not you a pony?" he said, addressing the elder boy.

"No!" replied the little fellow, without the least sign of jealousy or ill-humour; "Fred lets me ride his. Besides, I am strong, and don't want one."

"You shall have one!" said the old gentleman, shaking him by the hand; "and Annie, too."

The children were in ecstasies; from that moment, they bestowed upon the speaker a large share of their regard. It would be so delightful for them all three to ride together, instead of taking it by turns, as they now did.

When the captain heard of the promise, he smiled, and shook his head.

"It is well our friend does not come often to see us!" he said; "his kindness would spoil you!"

The next day the ponies were at the lodge.

"My aim has and will continue to be the character of my young pupil," observed the captain, as he and the goldsmith were seated in the study, the last night of the latter remaining with him; "his health, I think, we need no longer be alarmed at!"

His visitor grasped his hand.

"When he first came," continued the speaker, "he was timid, silent, and thoughtful, a look terrified him. Now he is bold and free as my own saucy lad, whose heart you have won by your liberality, as well as little Annie's!"

"Pray say no more on that subject!" exclaimed his visitor.

"Well, I will not!" continued the captain; "it was kindly done, and shall be as frankly accepted. But for my charge—he will have a hard battle to fight with his unnatural father. He will require energy, character, discipline, and self-control. To insure all these, I know of no training equal to that my own profession gives. In three years," he added, "unless you object, he will enter the service on board my own ship, with his companion, Dick, as a midshipman. The profession which produced Nelson, Codrington, and Napier, could not disgrace him, were he the son of a king."

"Be it so!" answered Mr. Brindley, with a sigh; "it is not the profession I should have chosen, but it is the best!"

The next day he returned by a different route to the one by which he had left London, and related to the delighted Goliath all that he had seen and heard at Mount Vernon.

(To be continued.)

A SERIOUS DRAWBACK.—The medical evidence which has been gone into at Dundee on the question of large brains, says that the owners of large brains have always had immensely thick skulls, this one fine quality being nullified by the other distracting one.

THE LATEST FROM THE SOUTHERN STATES.—Captain Adkins, of the Confederate army, has come to Ireland with a letter of introduction to the Roman Catholic Bishop of Kerry, for the purpose of warning Irishmen against being "duped" by Federal agents, who induce them to leave their country on false pretences.

THE TELEGRAPH IN RUSSIA.—The electric telegraph now extends, by way of Russia, to within 200 miles of Kiatchka, a frontier emporium close to the Chinese empire, between which and Pekin, about 1,000 miles distant, there is a regular post established, so that now it would be quite possible to communicate with Pekin from London in a week.

PROPOSED MONUMENT TO VISCOUNT COMBERMERE.—Arrangements are in progress for erecting a monument, in his native county, to the gallant and venerable Field-Marshal Viscount Combermere, now in his ninety-first year. This distinguished officer, whose gallant deeds as Sir Stapleton Cotton form so prominent a feature in the records of Wellington's Peninsular campaign, has served in the British army upwards of seventy years!

THE GUERNSEY STONE TRADE AND THE THAMES EMBANKMENT.—A large contract has been taken for the supply of Guernsey granite for the Thames embankment. Professor Tennant, of King's College, has certified that the rock is composed of quartz, felspar, hornblende, and mica, very hard and compact, and one of the best stones that could be selected for the purpose, being less likely to perish than granite. A hundred thousand tons, much of it dressed, have been ordered. The specimen sent to London was taken from the Ville Baudu Quarry, belonging to Mr. James Moultrie. The first stone for the undertaking has been worked. A quantity of stone, amounting to

40,000 tons, has been prepared by the workmen employed by the contractors for the Alderney breakwater. This large quantity was intended for the eastern arm, which has not yet been commenced; but preliminary inquiries have been made with a view to having it transferred to Chatham dockyard. There is a strike among the stone-crackers at St. Sampson for an increase of 2d per ton. Some of the men who are natives of the island wished to continue at the rates given at present, but were intimidated by the Irish portion of the labourers who were on strike.

THE ADOPTED DAUGHTER.

A TALE OF SANTIAGO.

At the mouth of the Rio de Santiago, in the province of Jalisco, Mexico, stands the ancient city of San Blas. Half a league east of the town, on the south bank of the river, is a magnificent villa, once owned and occupied by Don Leo Bernardo, a Spanish hidalgo.

He was pompous and haughty, assumed a degree of self-importance peculiar to that class of nobility where wealth gives position; yet he was pleasant, agreeable, and even social with those whom he considered his equals, or to whom he might take a peculiar fancy.

His wife was naturally of a quiet, amiable disposition, but excessively extravagant, expending enormous sums annually, simply to gratify a morbid taste for excelling in dress, jewellery and equipage. She looked down on the labouring classes as far beneath her notice—little better than slaves—yet with her special friends, whether they were poor or wealthy, she was the very essence of sociability—affable and obliging, courteous even to affectation.

At the period of our story—1860—they were well advanced in years—he sixty, she fifty-five. They had no children of their own—but had an adopted one—a young lady of eighteen summers.

The adoption was effected in this manner: The don and his wife being on a visit to the almshouse at San Blas, became interested in a little girl, five years old, whose grace of bearing, exquisite beauty of features and elegance of form, impressed them favourably, and they proposed to take and rear her as their own.

The specifications of the written contract entered into between the don and the proper authorities, bound him to treat her kindly: to educate and clothe her as became the daughter of a noble; that she should not be compelled to act as a menial, and at his death, she should become his heir, as much as if she had been born of his own flesh and blood.

This arrangement was made and signed by Leo Bernardo and his wife—they giving heavy bonds for the faithful discharge of their obligation—when Edith Hutchinson became the old hidalgo's daughter, and was removed from the poor-house to the princely residence of her foster-parents.

There were some rather singular particulars in the history of this child, with all of which the Spaniard was made acquainted before he adopted her.

It appeared when she was about a year old, a man and woman—both young—having her in charge, and supposed to be her parents, stopped at an hotel in San Blas, where they remained two months. They represented themselves as being on their way from Lima, Peru, to England, but as having been thrown out of their course by a terrible storm at sea.

Their conduct toward each other, during their sojourn in the city, was of the most affectionate nature, and they became great favourites with those whose acquaintance they formed. The wife was very sick when they arrived, and for a month it was not thought she could live. Then she began to recover, and soon after her health was quite restored.

Suddenly the woman disappeared under the most appalling circumstances. The departure was effected in the night, no one knew at what hour, nor how she went away, yet it was supposed she had taken passage on board a small vessel which sailed that morning at three o'clock—destination unknown.

The lodgers in that portion of the hotel occupied by the strangers, heard, some time during the night, a spasmodic shriek, as from a person in distress, followed quickly by a sharp scream from a child; that was all. The cry was not repeated, and the alarm was soon forgotten by the half-roused sleepers.

The couple not appearing at the breakfast-table as usual, their room was entered, when the man was found lying on the bed dead. His own dagger had been thrust through his heart, and the weapon left in the wound. The babe lay beside the corpse, but was not dead, although it had been heavily drugged, and the baggage had all been removed. It was a mysterious affair, and no definite solution was then reached, though the wife was strongly suspected.

The record on the register in the office, was "Mr. and Mrs. Hutchinson, New Orleans." The chamber-

maid had heard the child called Edith—this much was known—the rest remained many years before it was explained.

The foster-parents never had cause to regret the adoption of the beautiful Edith. She was one of those rare combinations of exquisite perfection of form, and truthfulness of disposition—gentle, confiding, loving, possessing accomplishments of a high order, yet seemingly ignorant of her personal charms. She was the pet and pride of her benefactors, and had been their own child, she could not have been the recipient of more kindness and consideration.

She was naturally pensive and thoughtful, yet not cheerless; fond of seclusion and meditation, yet enjoying the society and companionship of her associates with an ardent warmth of affection.

The Bernardo villa stood on a rather bold prominence facing the Rio Santiago, and surrounded by a magnificent park, consisting of over a hundred acres, every foot of which had been arranged with the utmost care. There were long winding paths, broad gravelled carriage-roads, shady groves, fountains and artificial lakes, with arbours, statues and ornaments scattered over the whole domain.

One bright afternoon in the spring of 1860, Edith wandered down a narrow path into the great park, culling flowers from different bushes and arranging a bouquet as she passed along. While thus engaged, she met a decrepit woman, dressed in deep mourning, walking feebly with a cane.

"Can you tell me who lives in this villa?" she asked, pausing and leaning on her staff.

"Don Leo Bernardo," Edith replied, eyeing her closely.

"I have walked a long way, and am weary," the woman remarked, after having given the young lady a careful scrutiny. "With your leave, I will sit down on this grass-plot to rest."

"Certainly. You look very tired—will you go with me to the villa? or shall I run and bring you a chair? How you tremble—are you in distress? Shall I call a servant?" Edith was alarmed.

"No, no, I thank you a thousand times!" was the quick response. "Do not put yourself to any inconvenience. I shall be rested in a few moments—it is a long way from the city, and the path is so winding, I feared sometimes I should never reach the villa." She sank languidly on the grass, and a tear fell on the emaciated hand clasped firmly around the end of her walking-stick.

There was a short pause when she added:

"Has Don Bernardo any children? Are you his daughter?" Her gaze was fixed steadily on Edith.

"He has none of his own. I am adopted. Why do you ask?" Her interest was increasing.

Removing her gaze, the woman answered:

"I have a very near relative somewhere in this country, whom I came to seek. I reached San Blas by steamer from the Panama, only three days since. My health is much broken, and I am quite an invalid; but being so lately supplied with money to aid me in my search, I am obliged to economise and walk where I would otherwise have employed a conveyance. This morning I succeeded in obtaining some intelligence of the one I sought, and came here for further information."

She stopped—a tall, stately man was approaching. He was quite a distance away, and she watched him for a moment with intense interest. Her features became pallid, and her hand trembled in its convulsed grip on her cane. Then rising abruptly, she drew her veil down over her face, and in a tremulous voice, said:

"Will you promise to breathe not a word of what has passed between us, to that man or anyone else, till you see me again?"

She held out her hand.

The wild look of the woman's eyes, her tone and gesture, startled Edith, but she placed her hand in that of the strange woman's, whose long, fleshless fingers closed around her with a firm pressure, and replied:

"You have my pledge, but why are you so fearfully agitated? Has that man ever injured you?"

"Hush! Let it pass now. I will see you again this evening, or in the morning," and she passed off as she came.

Edith was still gazing thoughtfully after her, when the man came up, saying:

"Well, fair senorita, have I disturbed your interview with that sombre-clothed lady yonder, who has flown without so much as favouring me with a look at her features?"

She turned towards him with a look, such as he had never before witnessed, and, for a moment, he was disconcerted. She saw the impression she had made, and, wishing to remove it, she replied:

"Signor Savoni is quite welcome to a short stroll in the park; and placing her arm in his, they walked on slowly in the direction taken by the strange woman, who had already disappeared around a bend in the path.

Without alluding to her again, they entered into conversation on the general topics of the day. He was blunt and animated in his discourse; she was thoughtful and reserved.

Reaching the bank of a little lake, they sat down on a knoll facing the water—a thick cluster of trees behind them.

"My nephew has just returned to the villa," he said. "He came up from the city with me, and is now with your guardian. Everything has been arranged for the marriage-ceremony to take place at nine o'clock to-morrow."

Edith was startled at the words, and inquired:

"What marriage?"

"Why, you and Oro Otto!" he answered, with a look of affected surprise at the interrogation.

"I have not been informed of any projected ceremony." The words were uttered with a show of feeling. "If I am to be an interested party, it seems proper and just that I should have been consulted previous to making any move in that direction, and I strongly oppose the idea of secrecy in the matter. When I am married, I shall not be ashamed if the whole world knows it."

She was perfectly aware that she had spoken with bitterness, and felt justly indignant at the implied assumption of those who sought to dictate to her, on a subject of such vital importance; but not wishing to offend the gentleman, she changed her tone and added:

"I do not know why, but there is a great load resting upon my mind. During the last half-hour there has been an impression of evil weighing down my thoughts, which I can neither account for nor remove. I desire that this wedding should be deferred until the time I designate. I have ample reason for the request. Oro Otto has always treated me with the most candid consideration, except in the present instance, and, I verily believe, a man every way honourable. I would dislike to do anything to wound his feelings, yet I demand, emphatically, that this affair should be delayed."

The man was evidently puzzled at the sudden exhibition of spirit, and unusual decision of character, in the hitherto gentle, submissive Edith; yet without affecting to notice the change, he said:

"This is but an idle fancy, my dear girl. All young ladies have the same feeling, when about to take this important step. You cannot possibly have objections when the hour arrives; besides it could not now be put off. The minister has been engaged to perform the ceremony, and your guardian is elated over the prospect. Well he may be, for my nephew's wealth exceeds his, and he has a finer estate than his in Italy. You ought to feel proud of your conquest, senorita, for there is not a lady in the dazzling courts of old Rome, but would consider herself flattered by the offer of his hand and fortune."

Edith did not reply for some time. Her face was bowed on her hands, and she was much moved by the thoughts that rushed through her mind. Finally, she raised her head, and turning her large eyes full upon him, she said:

"This is not a union of my making, Signor Savoni; and yet I am not entirely averse to it. I only ask a reasonable delay in the consummation. When I look back over the past few days I am surprised at myself, for it is only two months since you and Oro came to the villa for the first time. We were then strangers; we knew nothing of each other's antecedents, except as you judge by the don's social position and wealth; and we, by letters of recommendation and your own reports—yet how is it with us? On the very verge of a union for life! I do think this matter has been hasty; my guardian is old, and easily influenced; he has not acted with proper caution, and I have been very indiscreet. I never yet gave my pledge to wed your nephew, and this proceeding without my knowledge or consent has impressed me unfavourably. It is, in my estimation, very important that at least one year should elapse in which to learn, as fully as possible, the character and disposition of him in whom I place my future happiness. At the end of this period from our first acquaintance, if nothing shall occur to change my mind, I will marry your nephew, and not before."

The last clause was pronounced firmly, yet respectfully, and she rose to her feet.

The man was much displeased with her peremptory decision, and she was not slow to notice his chagrin; yet, not desirous of prolonging the interview, she expressed a wish to return to the villa. He arose, offered her his arm, and they passed off in silence.

During this colloquy the strange woman in black had lain among the bushes near by, where she had overheard every word. She was pale, and much agitated, while one hand was pressed hard upon her breast, as if in pain, and she murmured audibly: "Thank God! I am in time to save the sacrifice!"

CHAPTER II.

At the time Edith and Signor Savoni left the bank of the little lake, old Don Leo Bernardo and his wife sat in the spacious sitting-room of the villa, conversing with an elegantly dressed young man about twenty-two years of age, who was reclining carelessly on a sofa.

"I would not urge this matter so persistently," he remarked, as if continuing a conversation, "but special interests at home demand my immediate attention. Unfortunately, I made a very bad selection in employing an agent, previous to leaving England, and a handsome fortune from my estates is squandered every month."

"I am sorry to learn that you have taken upon yourself the responsibility of engaging some one to perform the ceremony without first having obtained the consent of Edith," interposed the donna. "I am fully aware that she looks upon you with much interest, and will, I doubt not, eventually become your wife; yet I am so well acquainted with her disposition and principles—and honour them, too,—that I know she will never consent to anything having the least appearance of wrong; and I solemnly protest against any secret movement in this matter. I want all proceedings to be free and open, and if Edith is going to be married, it is no more than right that the affair should be conducted in a manner worthy the occasion. Let us consult with her, and then arrange for one of the most brilliant weddings this country has ever witnessed."

"Do not censure Signor Otto too severely," remarked the don. "This morning, after much persuasion, I gave him and Signor Savoni a partial consent to the course they proposed. I did not approve of hasty marriages, and wondered if Edith had expressed a willingness to have the ceremony performed; yet after being told all the particulars, and that they must return to Italy immediately, I concluded if all parties were agreed I should not oppose. I supposed, however, that she had been advised of the movement, and am surprised that she was not."

"I shall not sanction any private or secret arrangement, whatever," reiterated the wife with emphasis. "When Edith is married I have friends who wish to be present, and so have you. Everything in this transaction must be open and above board, or I shall place my veto on it at once."

"Edith will offer no objections," the young man replied, not at all discomfited by the pointed allusions. "I feel quite sure of her ready consent. My uncle has gone into the park to acquaint her with the arrangement and obtain her approval. As for the matter of a public demonstration, that could be had when we return from Europe."

"I have nothing further to say until Edith's pleasure is known," returned the old don, speaking thoughtfully. "I have all confidence in her, and she shall not be imposed upon in any respect. Her smallest wish shall be law with me."

"Edith is a good, warm-hearted girl," rejoined the donna, not over well pleased with what had taken place, "and I wish she would never leave us."

"Then I will not, dear mother!" Edith exclaimed, that moment entering the room, yet in time to hear the remark. "I had rather remain with you and father." She advanced hastily, wound her full white arm around her foster-parent's neck, and added: "Mother, there is something in my heart tells me this is all mockery. The suspicions which the events of this day have aroused, must be removed, or I can never marry Signor Otto! I am bound only conditionally, and I claim my right to those conditions. If, at the end of a year's acquaintance, everything is agreeable, I will fulfil my obligation, but will never tolerate any secrecy in the matter."

"Really, dear Edith," interposed the young man, apparently affected by her sudden exhibition of feeling, "I see no cause for this distress; I urged it only because I must leave immediately. I will return with you within the year."

"You can go without me," she answered, still clinging to her mother. "We can correspond while you are absent, and on your return, if it is thought best, I will become your wife. It is useless to multiply words on the subject—my mind is fully decided."

"Her wish is sufficient, Signor Otto," observed the don. "You have her decision; that decision is ours. Such private arrangements as you and Signor Savoni have made for the marriage can be counter ordered. I would have withheld my consent this morning had you intimated that she had not been consulted."

"Edith will not deny me an interview this evening?" the young man asked, rising and taking his hat. "I would like to have my uncle present, when I think we can convince her that what I have done was not with any evil intention."

"If I am not too much indisposed," she replied, "I will see you; if not, you can call in the morning."

He bowed low; expressed a hope to find her more composed on his return, and left the villa.

There was a shade of disappointment on his features as he passed out into the park, and soon an angry scowl writhed his brow. He took the path leading most direct to the city, and had proceeded but a short distance when he met Signor Savoni, who was evidently waiting for him. They held a short, animated conversation in a low tone, and were excited; then they hurried away toward San Blas.

The sun was then an hour above the horizon, and Edith, instead of going to her room, passed out into the park and wandered off toward the spot where she had seen the strange woman, whose words and actions had so deeply interested her.

Moving along in a deep study, she heard her name called. Turning in the direction of the voice, she saw the very person of whom she was thinking. So deep was her meditation, that the calling of her name by the stranger did not awaken any new feeling, and she advanced directly to the woman.

She was sitting on the ground at the root of a tree, her head leaning against the trunk, and her features pallid.

Edith, alarmed at her look, asked if she should call a servant and have her assisted to the villa.

"It is but a momentary spasm," she replied; "I shall feel stronger in a moment."

There was a brief interim of silence, when the woman added:

"Can you admit me to your own private room without any one of the family or servants seeing us?"

"Yes," was the ready reply, "but why seek to elude them. They are good people, and no one needy is ever turned away from their door."

"That was not what I feared," she answered. "I will explain myself to your entire satisfaction when we are where there will be no interruption."

Edith, without pausing to consider, gave her arm to the woman, and they passed off toward the villa. A few moments later, they were both in Edith's room, and the door was locked.

Three-quarters of an hour after Edith entered the villa, she re-appeared at the back entrance, and tripped along a gravel walk to where a man was pruning some bushes. There were tears on her cheeks, and her eyes were red from weeping; yet there was a smile upon her lips, and her voice was animated.

"Uiso, harness the horse to the carriage as soon as possible, I want to go to the city. You need not drive round to the front. I will meet you here, and we will cross through the park."

The man dropped his pruning-knife and started off briskly toward the stable, while she re-entered the villa. Ten minutes later, she re-appeared once again, and the strange lady was leaning on her arm. The carriage was waiting; they entered it, closed the door, and the driver mounting the box, the vehicle with its occupants was moving away across the great park at a brisk trot. The sun was then just disappearing, apparently sinking in the bosom of the great ocean.

It was nearly nine o'clock in the evening when the carriage returned, and it halted back in the park some distance from the villa.

The driver sprang from his seat, threw open the door, when a gentleman not more than twenty-two years of age, alighted. He turned and handed Edith from the vehicle, then carefully assisted the strange woman. There was not a word spoken, and the gentleman giving an arm to each of the ladies, they entered the villa unobserved.

Through a back passage, Edith conducted her companions to an upper parlour, an apartment seldom visited. Here she left the gentleman, but took the lady to another room, then went below. At the foot of the stairs she met her foster-father with a lighted taper, who said:

"Signor Otto and his uncle are here and have been waiting an hour. We have sent twice to your room, but receiving no answer, supposed you had fallen asleep. They are becoming so impatient at the delay, I had just started to see if I could find you."

"Come with me, father," she replied, "and I will tell you where I have been."

She took hold of his arm to assist him up-stairs, but he stopped short, held the taper before her face, and looked straight into her eyes.

"Is it Edith?" he asked, "or do my eyes fail me? Your voice is so changed I would not have recognized it, had I not seen you, and you are nervously excited. Speak, child! what has occurred to affect you thus?"

"Come with me and I will show you."

She led him to the upper parlour where she had left the gentleman. The taper gave sufficient light to see him plainly.

Viscount Delzo, my father Don Leo Bernardo," said Edith.

"Pierre Delzo, high sheriff of San Blas!" exclaimed the old don in surprise. "What does this mean?"

"He will explain it all, father," Edith replied. "I will go and entertain our worthy guests," and she left the apartment, closing the door after her.

She called a moment at the room where the strange woman was, then descended the stairs, and proceeded direct to the sitting-room where the donna and the two impatient gentlemen were awaiting her presence.

Very soon after, Don Bernardo entered the apartment at one door, and with a casual remark passed out at another. He took a turn round through the rooms and ascended to the upper parlour again. Then the officer approached a window looking back into the park, and having the taper in his hand, held it for a moment close to the glass.

Directly upon this, a number of men among the shrubbery outside, came stealthily toward the villa from different directions, and so stationed themselves as to command every entrance to the building. This successfully accomplished, a peculiar signal was given from without, which the sheriff appeared to understand, and immediately left the apartment, accompanied by Don Bernardo.

Descending the stairs, they communicated a moment in a whisper, with one of the outside party at the front door, then entered the sitting-room where Signor Savoni and Otto, with Donna Bernardo and Edith were seated.

Don Bernardo introduced the gentleman simply as his friend Pierre. Neither of the signors were acquainted with the officer, and supposing him to be merely a caller, they took no notice of his presence after the first exchange of civilities, other than to express their disapprobation of the intrusion by a marked coolness.

"Jacob Foster alias Signor Savoni," remarked the officer bluntly, rising and removing a bundle of papers from his pocket; "I hold a document, properly issued, directing me to effect your arrest wherever found, and detain you on a charge of murder, committed on the person of Alfred Hutchinson on the night of the 10th of June, 1842.

"Felix Castor, alias Signor Otto, I arrest you on a charge of burglary and robbery committed in the city of San Francisco, on the night of the 15th of March, 1850."

"What farce is this?" demanded Savoni, haughtily, rising to his feet, his eye burning with intense fire. "Do you seek to insult me?" and he drew a pistol from his bosom.

"I am in the just performance of my duty," returned the officer coolly, nothing daunted by the threat or gesture. "I am high sheriff of San Blas, and demand your instant surrender."

"Not while I have power to raise a pistol or pull a trigger," retorted the signor with a leer. "I will shoot the first man who approaches me."

Don Bernardo and Edith witnessed the scene as if they had previously been informed of what was to occur; but the donna was excited and alarmed. She did not venture an intervention.

"This is a fine return for my hospitality," the old don remarked coldly, addressing the frowning villain. "Two months ago you came to my villa, and informed us that you were direct from Italy. You brought letters of recommendation, representing that you were wealthy and of good standing in society, all of which we were fools enough to accredit. On your second visit, you brought an accomplice in your villainous project, whom you called your nephew. Together you have well-nigh effected the ruin of my family. I have no words capable of expressing my utter loathing for the course you have pursued. There is no punishment—even death—capable of inflicting a just retribution for the crime you contemplated. All I can say is that I hope the law will not be cheated of its victims this time. If it does, and either of you ever step a foot on my premises, I will shoot you as I would a mad dog."

During this pointed speech the younger villain remained silent. He was so completely astonished at the overthrow of his well-laid plans, that for a moment he did not know how to act, or what to say; but his natural audacity and self-possession soon returned to his assistance, and assuming an air of injured dignity, he answered:

"I cannot answer for my friend, Signor Savoni, but for myself, I will succumb to no such insult. Out of respect to the grey hairs of him, who is the guardian of her I have won for my future wife, I spare him any taunt; but you, sir braggart—to the officer—I hold personally accountable for your words, and demand a retraction and apology, or the satisfaction of a gentleman."

"You will receive such satisfaction as is for your good," returned the sheriff, coolly. "Do you believe what I have asserted with reference to your associate? Not that I wish to hold any conversation with either of you, or delay in the execution of my duty, but that I may more fully satisfy my friend, Don Bernardo, and his worthy wife that I have not acted unadvisedly in

this matter. I will here introduce an important witness in the case of Jacob Foster. As for yourself, I have sufficient testimony."

Edith, as if fully acquainted with the part she was to act, had left the room a few moments before, and just as the officer concluded his remarks, she returned, accompanied by the strange woman in black.

There was a perceptible sensation created by the presence of the lady, but the officer quietly placed her a seat, folded his arms complacently, and said:

"Madam, you will please tell our worthy host and hostess what you know of the elder of these two men before us."

"Nearly eighteen years ago," the woman commenced, motioning for Edith to sit by her side, "in company with my husband and an infant daughter, I left Lima for my native home—England. We had been in Peru ten years—my husband had a large amount of gold, which he drew from a bank the day on which we sailed. Our intended route was to Panama, then across the isthmus to Chagres, where we intended to take a steamer for home; but unfortunately, a severe storm drove us far out of our course, and after many days of great peril we landed at the mouth of the Rio Santiago. I was very sick at the time, and my husband, fearing to proceed with me, took rooms at an hotel in San Blas, where I was made as comfortable as the circumstances would admit.

"On the voyage we were annoyed by the presence of a man, who we thought intended to rob us of our gold. My husband knew him in Lima. His name was Jacob Foster, and he was in the bank at the time my husband drew the money, and knew how much there was. We hoped by stopping in the city to elude him, but in this we were mistaken. He hung around continually, yet affected to take no notice of us.

"One night, after we had been at the hotel about two months, he stole into our room, and taking my husband's dagger from a stand at the head of our bed, stabbed him through the heart, leaving the weapon in the wound. The movement awoke me, and I had just sufficient time to see what had been done and to utter a cry of alarm; when I was struck senseless by a blow from the murderer's hand.

"The next I remembered, I was on board a small vessel which eventually landed in Canton. My distress at the tragical end of my husband, the loss of my child, and my own situation, rendered me nearly distracted, and I was treated as a lunatic. The man who had murdered my husband had me in charge, and affected great uneasiness for my condition, often lamenting, even with tears, at my mental derangement; yet I was as sane then as I am now or ever was.

"In Canton I was placed in an insane asylum, which was the last I ever saw of my husband's murderer, till to-day. The more I tried to convince my keeper that my senses were all sound and healthy; that I had been imposed upon, and my husband murdered, the more obstinate he was of belief. I tried to impress upon his mind the true condition I was in, yet to all my entreaties he turned a deaf ear, until I feared that I might indeed lose my identity.

"Fifteen long years I remained in that asylum, when the consul from Peking, being on a visit to the institution with some friends, succeeded in impressing them with the truth of my situation. I was instantly released, and they kindly furnished me with the necessary means to clothe myself respectably, and to return to my friends.

"I at once took passage for San Blas, to try and find my child, if it had escaped the murderous hands of her father's slayer, and was still living. Inquiring at the hotel where I stopped with my husband and child eighteen years before, I found it occupied by another landlord, yet he remembered the incidents of the murder, and told me that the child had been taken to the almshouse."

"I went there, and learned that she had been adopted by a Spanish hidalgo named Don Leo Bernardo. I found where he lived, and this morning started from the city on foot, reaching the villa a little after noon. I met a young lady in the park, and after asking her a few questions, was satisfied she was my daughter. I would have made myself known at the time, but that moment I saw a man approaching, and instantly recognized him as Jacob Foster, the murderer of my husband.

"I retired before he came up, but managed to see my daughter again soon after, and arranged with her to take me to the city, where I gave proper information of my discovery, and took measures to have the murderer arrested. I learned that he had an associate, who had been identified as a person that had committed an extensive robbery in California. My name is Emma Hutchinson, and Edith is my own child. This man before me is her father's murderer."

This narration created considerable feeling in the minds of the don and his wife, but the culprits manifested a sullen indifference.

"I see you have too strong evidence for me," re-

marked the arch-villain, interrupting the donna in an exclamation of surprise, and cocking his pistol; but you have not sufficient force to make the arrest. If it will be any gratification to you I will state that what the woman has said is correct. I will further state that I knew Edith to be her daughter, yet our object was to secure this estate, turn it into money, and leave the country. Had we succeeded, the girl would not have lived, only till we came in possession. You understand us now, so do your worst. Draw, Otto, and let us fight our way out. Once in the open country, we can easily effect our escape."

"Not so fast," retorted the officer, "I have not come unprepared for any emergency," and he stamped heavily on the floor.

There were two doors leading from the apartment, and that instant both flew wide open, and each passage was barred with the muzzles of six pistols pointed threateningly toward, and as many towering forms blocked the openings.

A scream from the ladies was followed by the fierce curse of the culprit, and the murderer shouted:

"This way!" Each held a pistol in one hand and a bowie-knife in the other, and they sprang simultaneously toward one of the doorways as if to cut their way through. There was a deafening discharge of fire-arms, mingling with the oaths of the combatants, and the frantic shrieks of the women, while the apartment was filled with sulphuric smoke.

In an instant of time, almost, the commotion ceased, and both of the villains lay on the floor. They were writhing in their blood, and after a few gasps expired. Two of the police force were wounded, but not seriously.

Six months have passed since the exposure and death of the murderer and his colleagues, and changes worthy of record have occurred at the old Spanish villa. Edith Hutchinson and her mother are still there. The tomb of the murdered husband and father was found with much difficulty, in the graveyard; the remains were disinterred and deposited in the family burial-place belonging to the villa estate, and a suitable monument erected to his memory.

Almost every evening Edith and her mother would deck the grave anew with bouquets and wreaths, and strew the ground with flowers. Often the don and donna would accompany them, and they would sit by the mound for hours together talking over the past, yet never by word or hint referring to the scenes attending the presence of the plotting villains, who had so nearly accomplished the ruin of the generous Edith.

It was a happy family; and the warm-hearted Spaniard, with his noble wife, had obtained a promise that the adopted daughter, and her mother should never leave them while they lived; but in time the aged were gathered to their last home, and Edith was alone.

She was sole heiress to the vast possessions of the Spanish hidalgo; and at the earnest solicitation of Pierre Delzo, the young officer who officiated at the tragic scene of the murder, became his bride. They still remain on the estate, and are contented and happy.

M. J. H.

STRAY THOUGHTS.

A FRIEND! what a rare blessing is a friend! If you have one, love him and cherish him. His price is above rubies. Where in the wide world, shall we find a friend? From what remote corner of the earth, drawn by the irresistible magnetism of attraction, shall he come? What winds shall bear him on his journey? What shores give him a welcome?

But when he does come, let him be treated as a prince—a king come to claim his waiting kingdom. We will be a loyal subject. His interest shall be our interest—there shall be nothing separate in his life and ours.

A friend! One who stands firm, and true, and unshaken by time, circumstance, or the vile weapons of slander! Ours, and ours only! Like a sturdy oak in the very centre of a stream—swayed neither hither nor thither. Bearing, may be, the scars of strife on its iron sides, but holding fast to its place—sure and steadfast as eternity itself!

Our friend must be ours only. We feel constantly a desire to appropriate him to ourselves. He may love others, but we must hold the first place in his heart of hearts. Is it selfish? Granted. Then we are selfish. We do not want him to care quite as much for any other one as for us. We would like to hold him a little closer than any other key.

We would like the right to go to him, always, in trial, with our troubles and afflictions, our joys and our sorrows, and be sure of his sympathy. In return, what would we give him?

Not a sentiment, not a feeling, not a mere motive, but a principle of friendship, strong and unvarying

and lasting, as the pulse of life in our own heart. We would be true to him as refined steel. In his day of adversity, we should be proud to stand beside him, in the face of the whole world, forgiving every error and every sin, content with him as he is; ready to uphold him against every law and every power. Raised up to the highest, most holy shrine in our bosom, by the sacred fact, he is our friend.

We would not throw him away for a light cause. As the mother-love pardons the transgressions of her child, so would we, seventy times seven, cast into oblivion the failing of our friend.

We love to be with him. There is something lacking without him.

The round world is not a perfect sphere without his presence. We should be discontented in this life, if he was not of it, also.

The earth holds nothing so dear and fair as to give us perfect pleasure—missing him. When we see beautiful things, our first desire is that he may see them, too. When we read quaint old truths that stir the blood like crimson wine, we want him to know their delights! We are never satisfied with the purple sunset skies, unless his eyes, also, are blessed with their glory!

Oh, friendship! for ever sanctified be thy name! Sweetest and purest of all earthly passions! A chain reaching across the chaos of doubt and fear; its plus of pearl, and its strings of gold, bridging the dark chasm—reaching across to the white shores of the Beautiful Beyond. C. A.

THE NIGHT MESSENGER.

The night was dark, and on the window-pane
The gentle pattering of the chilly rain
Fell with a deep and melancholy sound,
And gleam without o'ershadowed all around.
The family friends assembled around the fire
To while an evening hour ere they retire,
And talk of wonders they had heard and seen,
And others which perhaps had never been,
As most, in story-telling, oft are prone,
To robe the real with some things unknown,
And make the wonder all the more complete
By shielding truth with folly and deceit.
They talked of travelling and being lost;
Of spook and spirit, goblin and of ghost;
Of haunted houses they had heard and known
Where no one dared to go and lodge alone;
Of alarms, forebodings, signs, and second-sight,
And other nonsense which I will not write.
And as they talked, each earnestly partook
Of gloominess in gesture, voice, and look,
Till each became half-paralyzed with fright,
So doubly sad they made that stormy night.

The aged head upon the hand reclined
To hum and dose the sadness of the mind;
Perhaps surveying all the world behind,
And musing on the vanities below,
Which younger folks can scarcely think or know,
As such a night of gloominess and rain
Excludes all folly from the aged brain.
While thus their wild and ghostly tales they tell,
Three gentle raps upon the window fell;
The mind, quite ready to deceive the eye,
Decided soon that spirits must be nigh.
Rap, rap, again, against the window-pane,
Came forth the spirits and the pattering rain.

The farmer rose, and opening the door,
And reaching up, he from the window bore,
A little snow-bird, which, perchance, the wind
Had blown away and left its perch behind;
And by the wreck, no doubt, so shocked with fright,
As made it seek protection from the light.
But some felt sure the little stranger came
Upon a mission of more lofty aim;
And said it had a message from on high
To one of merit who was seated nigh;
Or, so at least the supposition ran,
For why should it seek shelter here with man?

The guests, delighted, eagerly admired,
And each in turn the little bird desired;
But most were prone the messenger to kill,
Believing it the monitor of ill.
But one there was of sympathetic care,
A youthful teacher who was boarding there;
Observing it so lonely and forlorn,
Desired much to keep it until morn.
So, rising up, he to the farmer said:
"Perhaps this bird has come to seek my aid;
And, since to me high Heaven's been so kind,
Why not in me this little stranger find
A heart so humble as to kindly lend
A love to even a lone feathered friend?
Then give it me, I'll shelter it from gloom,
And let it share the pleasures of my room."

He took the bird to give it better rest,
While high its heart beat in its little breast;

Nor wondered why that it should thus complain
Of such protection, worse than wind and rain;
He gently turned and hastened up the stair,
And in his room he let it flutter there;
But scarcely had it 'gan to flap about,
Ere something else came flapping from without.
"Here, sure," said he, "is something strange in fate,
There is, no doubt, the little stranger's mate.
And by magnetic instinct of the mind
Knows where to come its little friend to find;
Knows how to pull the sympathetic string,
And to its love direct its tiny wing."

He raised the window, and, though strange, yet true,
That quickly in the little stranger flew;
And on the mirror felt disposed to sit,
For there he saw it when his lamp was lit.
It being late, he soon retired to rest,
When both flew down and lighted on his breast;
And thrice they rose and hovered o'er his bed,
As though they came to warn him of the dead.
But the truer mission of the little pair,
No doubt, was only that they happened there.
How long upon his resting-place they stay,
The bird must answer, for he could not say.
His weary soul deep slumber did invite,
And thus in peace he passed the dismal night.

'Twas Sunday morn, and late when he awoke,
His pleasant dreams the breakfast-bell had broke,
Upon the window sat the little pair,
Impatient to inhale the morning air;
He kindly raised it, let them gaily fly,
And as they went he bade them both good-bye.

And thus they met, but ne'er may meet again,
Unless he rise in realms of their domain;
For surely I need never hope to rhyme
That they on him have called a second time;
As man's protection, however kindly given,
To them is rude, compared with that of Heaven.
Yes, man's huge face is awful in their sight,
And ten times worse than any stormy night.

FRANCIS D. LACY.

THE MURDER AT THE SPRING.

It bubbled from a rock by the roadside, forming a miniature waterfall, at which the inhabitants of the little village of Springvale were wont to fill their buckets, for the spring was known for miles round, and celebrated for the coolness of its waters.

On a sultry day in August, many years ago, a woodcutter came from the forest behind the spring to stake his thirst. He cast his axe down in the grass, and then, bating his flushed brow with the cool element, he formed his hands into a spout, and drank freely. With a sigh of relief he lay down under the shade of some stunted cedar-trees, that grow, like feathers, from the rock-side.

He was an old man, grey and weather-beaten, but his huge frame still gave evidence of great strength. His arms, bared to the elbow, were sinewy with muscle; his chest broad and massive; his features were good, and would have been pleasant in their expression, but for the marks that an inordinate thirst for strong drink had left upon them. You could see the confirmed inebriate in his face at a glance.

As he lay in the shade, a man approached by the road going towards the village. He was a stout, portly, middle-aged man, with the appearance of a well-to-do farmer. He paused by the spring for a drink. In coming through the grass he struck his foot against the woodman's axe.

"What's that?" he cried sharply. "An axe! It is well it did not cut my leg off."

"If it had cut your head off it would have been no matter," said the woodman, rising upon his elbow.

"You here still, vagabond?" asked the other, disdainfully.

"Vagabond?" echoed the woodcutter, wrathfully. "Aye, that's the word—the rich man's stigma, the poor man's brand. Ha, ha, ha! vagabond! You do well, Swete Bickersteth, to apply that name to me."

"You are not hanged yet?" said the one he had called Swete Bickersteth, as he quenched his thirst at the spring.

"I am waiting until you turn hangman," responded the woodcutter, with sarcasm. "You look like one already, with that hanging brow of yours."

"Insolent pauper!" rejoined Bickersteth. "If I had my way, I would annihilate the whole brood of such vermin as yourself."

"That you have done pretty well already, as regards me and mine. Three of them sleep in the old churchyard, under the green elm yonder. I have just been there to weep over their graves."

"Weep—you—ha, ha, ha!" laughed Bickersteth. "Do you weep when you enter the tavern, drunkard?"

The woodcutter made a sudden movement, and

there was a ferocious gleam in his eye, but he repressed himself, and sank back upon the grass again.

"You do well to taunt me with the tavern," he made answer; you, who understand nothing about where the misery which you create finds a still more miserable solace. Drink, drink!" he continued, with much feeling and apparent remorse. "It is a curse—a crime! I know it—I own it. I was sober enough once, till you made me a wretch—a drunkard, as you call me!"

"I—I made you so?"

"Yes, I had the misfortune to be your tenant. I was young, strong, industrious. I got married, was well, happy, the father of two fine, lovely children, when the fever came upon me. I didn't die—would to Heaven I had! No, but the children caught it, and died for their poor father." He cast his eyes upward as he continued, as if he could see their little faces in the lovely summer sky. "Oh, my poor children—my little ones! you hear this man, the cause of all my despair, call me a drunkard. Look down from heaven, where you are, and inspire your heart-broken father with forbearance."

The tears gathered in his eyes and rolled down upon his weather-beaten cheeks, as he concluded this apostrophe.

"Forbearance!" echoed Bickersteth, with disdain. The woodcutter sprang to his feet and grasped his axe.

"Forbearance?—yes," he answered, wrathfully; "else know I not why I should not with this axe strike you dead at my feet!"

"Fellow—Wardlaw, be careful!" cried Bickersteth, retreating a few steps in alarm.

"When I think of my wife," continued Wardlaw (for that was the woodcutter's name), pursuing the train of his reflections, "dying, and how, because I owed you a few dollars, you and your minions of the law rushed into the cottage, and tore the bed from under her. She had nowhere to die but in her husband's arms. Merciful powers! I think I see her now—her fading eyes dimly fixed on mine; she could not speak, but they seemed to speak for her."

"Begone! leave the village," exclaimed Swete Bickersteth, with rising anger, "or it will be worse for you."

"What! you threaten me—me your victim! What further harm can you possibly do me? You have robbed me of all that rendered life worth having; now to give me a release in death would almost be to redeem your own soul by a last crime. Man, man!" he continued, working himself into a frenzy, and feeling the keen edge of his axe, "while my hands wrestle with this sharp instrument, it may be that the devil tempts me to my own destruction as well as yours."

He flourished the axe around his head and made a step towards Bickersteth, who stumbled backward, calling loudly for help, tripping over some bushes and falling.

The murderous purpose of Wardlaw (if such it was) was prevented by a girl, who had come up the road unperceived by either, to fill her bucket at the spring. She sprang before Wardlaw, and seized the uplifted axe, crying:

"Oh, James—James Wardlaw, what would you do?"

"Who are you?" exclaimed Wardlaw, gazing upon her with a wild, unsettled expression.

"Don't you know me?" asked the girl, mildly, and in a soothing tone. "I am Almira—Almira Wheat, who used to come to your cottage so often when your children were ill, and watched by their side, with their poor sick mother."

"I took you for an angel," replied Wardlaw, strangely subdued, and lowering his axe. "But I thought that an angel could never descend to interfere between vengeance and a wretch like that. You have saved him this time. Almira Wheat, have a care he does not sting you as he did me; he will gnaw your heart with teeth of fire, and then ask you why you weep. You have saved him this time, curse him!"

And shouldering his axe, he went into the wood.

"The mad ruffian!" exclaimed Bickersteth, whose alarm had now given place to rage. "He shall pay for this. I'll swear my life against him—put me in bodily fear and peril!"

He was about to follow Wardlaw, but Almira restrained him.

"Do not follow him, he is not in his right mind," she said, and the tears of sympathy stood in her bright blue eyes. "Poor man, poor man!"

A new motive seemed to sway Bickersteth, for he suddenly forgot his rage, and became as placid as ever.

"How sweetly fall such accents from your lips, Almira," he said, gently. "Tears, too, for a worthless reprobate like that; yet for me, who have so often told you of my esteem, you have no tear, no spark of pity."

Almira turned towards the spring, as if to avoid an unpalatable subject.

"I must fill my bucket and hasten home," she said. "My father is alone; he expects me."

"Almira, listen to me," said Bickersteth. "I have already spoken to your father; he consents to accept me as his son-in-law, if you will only say yes."

"My father?" repeated Almira, in surprise.

"You know that I am well-to-do in the world. My houses, land, money—all shall be yours, only say the word."

He grasped her by the left hand as she raised her bucket and was about to depart; she set down the bucket and answered him with decision.

"I told you from the first, what I say for the last time, it is impossible!"

"Is this your final answer?"

"Mr. Bickersteth, it is; so now let go my hand."

"Scornful girl!" cried the rejected suitor, in a rage. "Do you think that I will calmly suffer you to become the wife of Orrin Thornwell, a paltry farmer, or that I cannot find some redress for the scorn with which you have treated my proposal?"

"Then, what the poor mad labourer forewarned just now is coming to pass," exclaimed Almira, indignantly. "I saved your life, and, like the serpent, you are going to sting me for it."

"Not you, but him!"

"We have but one heart between us, and he that injures him, injures me. Let me go, let me go!" And she struggled to free herself from his grasp.

"We are alone," he cried, as he held her fast. "I will force you to listen to me—to be mine."

"Help!" she shrieked. "Ah, here is Orrin!"

He released her to confront the new comer, a fine-looking young farmer, with a fowling-piece in his hand. It was Orrin Thornwell just returning from a hunt after birds.

"Almira!" he exclaimed, as he drew near, "what terrifies you? Has that man offered you any insult?" He cast a fierce look at Bickersteth, as he spoke.

"No, no," she answered quickly. "Let us go home."

"Not till I have had an explanation," he said, advancing to Bickersteth.

"Explanation to you!" cried Bickersteth, scornfully—"a man of my condition?"

"Condition!" repeated Orrin, disdainfully. "What's condition? Condition is to behave one's self in an honourable manner; and he who does not, though he possessed a mine of wealth, is a scoundrel, and nothing else."

"Come, Almira," said Bickersteth, without condescending to reply to Thornwell, "I'll see you home myself."

"You!" exclaimed Thornwell, fiercely, and presenting his gun, "you touch the tip of her little finger, and I'll send a shot through your brain!"

Almira instantly seized the gun by the barrel, and turned it aside.

"Are you also mad, Orrin?" she cried. "As you hope for my love, come away. Come away, for Heaven's sake! Give me the gun, Orrin." She took it playfully from his hands, and leaned it against the trunk of a tree. "Now you must follow me—come."

Mr. Bickersteth had retreated down the road with some precipitation. His life threatened twice in the same day—he, the richest man in the village—things had come to a pretty pass. Seeing that he had frightened his rival from the field, Thornwell insisted upon carrying Almira's bucket of water. A playful struggle ensued for its possession, and Orrin having obtained it, and a kiss into the bargain, they proceeded home.

It was not until he had bid Almira good-evening, for twilight was fast approaching, that Orrin remembered he had left his gun standing against the tree by the spring. He hastened quickly back to recover it.

As he ran down the road he heard the report of a gun, and he thought a scream of pain followed it. He reached the spring; all was quiet, and there was the gun just where Almira had placed it. He took it, and turned into the road again. He was suddenly grasped by two labouring men, who were yet dusty and warm with their toil in the field.

"We've got him!" shouted one. "Holloa! bring along the murdered man."

"What does this mean?" asked Orrin, in great surprise.

"Here's the gun he did it with," cried the other, wrenching the gun from Orrin's grasp.

"Did it? Did what?" questioned Orrin, in bewilderment.

"Just as if you didn't know! I heard the gun, and saw Mr. Bickersteth fall, and there he lies, stark dead, in the road."

"Mr. Bickersteth dead—murdered?" exclaimed Orrin; and he turned ghastly pale.

"Yes; and when we ran up here in the direction of the shot, we found you with the gun in your hand."

Orrin began to collect his senses, which had been

somewhat scattered by this sudden and alarming intelligence.

"If you will examine my gun," he said, "you will find it loaded; and if you came up here as quickly as you say, must see that I had not time to re-charge it."

"That's a fact," said one of the labourers.

The other examined the gun.

"All right," he said. "No mistake; we've got the right one—the gun is empty!"

Orrin's knees sank under him as the dread truth flashed through his brain—the murder had been committed with this gun! Circumstances were strongly against him, how could he prove his innocence? Why, by Almira, to be sure; she could prove that he was in her company when the deed was committed. He took heart after this reflection, and bore his arrest with patience.

Some more labourers now brought the body of Swete Bickersteth up the road and laid him down by the spring. They bathed his face with the cooling water, to wash away the blood-stains, for his wound was in the face; he was quite dead—shot through the brain.

The alarm spread through the village, and men, women and children flocked around the melancholy procession as it came up the road. The labourers had formed a litter from the boughs of the trees, and on it placed all that remained of Swete Bickersteth. The crowd almost blocked up the road, to look upon the dead man and his reputed murderer.

A murder in Springvale—only to think of it! Never, in the memory of its oldest inhabitant, had such a deed been perpetrated in those quiet precincts before. How they praised the departed (they never had a good word while he lived, but his money cowed them into respect); how they derided his murderer—a young man, who that morning they had regarded as an ornament to their town, and against whose character no one could speak a word of reproach.

The dead man was conveyed to his stately mansion—the largest house in the village—and placed in charge of his servants until an inquest could be held. Orrin Thornwell was locked up in the "strong room" for the night, and admission to him refused. This prohibition extended to Almira as well as his own family; and they, his own kindred and his sweetheart, were the only ones in his native village, where he had grown from infancy to manhood, who believed him to be innocent.

The inquest was held, and Orrin was examined, with the same result in both cases—a verdict of wilful murder against him.

The evidence may be briefly summed up. The labourers had heard the report of the gun, and Mr. Bickersteth's cry for help; they had left their work and hurried to the spot. They had found the body in the road, the flesh yet warm, and they had found Orrin Thornwell in the place from whence the shot proceeded, with the empty gun in his hand. Nothing could be clearer. Almira, Orrin's only witness, made matters worse; she told of the quarrel and her lover's threat, for the story was extracted from her by cross-questioning. This was the most damaging evidence of all, as it proved an ill-feeling existing between the prisoner and the deceased—also a motive for the deed.

Orrin was sent to the county town to await his trial. He was tried, found guilty, and sentenced to be hung; and in all probability he would have suffered for a crime which he had never committed, had not Providence interposed.

James Wardlaw, whilst pursuing his avocation of woodcutter, was crushed beneath a falling tree; he lived long enough to confess that he murdered Swete Bickersteth, and then expired in great agony.

He had remained hidden in the wood behind the spring, and heard all that had transpired, for he had suddenly taken the resolution into his brain, crazed by strong drink, to kill Swete Bickersteth. Had this unfortunate man gone up the road after his meeting with Orrin, he would have escaped; but alarmed at Orrin's threat, he had lingered until the lovers were out of sight, and then followed.

Wardlaw had perceived the gun, and, with a madman's cunning, determined to use it. He did so, with the fatal effect we have seen, replaced it, and plunged into the wood in a headlong flight. Whether he would have allowed an innocent man to have suffered the penalty of his crime, it is hard to say. It was well Heaven interposed.

Thornwell was released and returned to the village, where he was well received. They, the villagers, never doubted his innocence. All this was very consoling to a man who had so narrowly escaped a hanging.

In due time, Orrin and Almira were married; but it was many years before the memory of the murder at the spring ceased to be a painful one.

G. S. A.

THE PROPOSED BECKENHAM LINE.—The promoters of this bill, for making a new line from London to

Brighton, by a junction at Beckenham with the Chatham and Dover Railway, have been declared to have complied with the standing orders. The estimated cost of the new line is £2,500,000.

A SUSPENSION BRIDGE IN BRITISH COLUMBIA.—The first wire suspension bridge has been erected in British Columbia, over the Fraser river near Chapman's Bar. It has a clear span of 268 feet. The designer and constructor of this bridge was A. S. Heald, of San Francisco, Cal. The cost was \$3,000 dollars.

MINNESOTA; OR, AN INDIAN'S GRATITUDE

DURING the summer of 1862, the civilized world was astounded at the atrocious barbarities that were perpetrated upon the settlers of Minnesota, by armed bands of infuriated savages. Every atrocity known to the calendar of crime was enacted, with all its heart-rending accompaniments, with regard to age, sex, or condition.

For many months the different tribes who lived in the neighbourhood had been banded together for the purpose of exterminating the white settlers, goaded doubtless by the non-payment of their government claims, and alarmed at the continual encroachment of the white settlers upon their hunting-grounds. With such quietness and secrecy was the whole matter conducted that no suspicion of their intentions entered the minds of the settlers, and the confidence which association implants in the human breast remained undisturbed.

On the night of —, 1862, at that solemn hour when the parting and the coming day meet in fond embrace, the pall of death fell upon the village of —. The eyes that were closed by the gentle hands of sleep, were for ever sealed by death, never to open again upon the light of this world. The fond mother, who slumbered with her babe pillowed upon her bosom, was inhumanly massacred, and her darling in life was her companion in death.

Neither age, sex, nor infirmity was a shield against the fury of the savage demons, and the scathing-knife and tomahawk glistened in the light of the burning village. The village was reduced to a shapeless mass of smouldering ruins, with which were mingled the charred remains of those who loved their village home.

Among those who escaped the uplifted hand of the revengeful savages was old Joe Stack; but while his life was spared him, yet he was taken prisoner, and marched away amid the exultant and execrating shouts of the savages.

Joseph Stack, or as he was more familiarly known, "Old Joe," was a man of about the age of fifty years, tall, stout, and muscular, with iron-grey hair and a grizzly beard, and possessing a countenance which stamped him as an honest man. He had resided in the settlements for a quarter of a century, long before the birth of the village above alluded to. A New Englander by birth, and possessing the education and polished intellect characteristic of that portion of the country, and a descendant of the Pilgrim Fathers, old Joe was ever a truthful, honest, and truly religious man. He married in early life, but the happiness of his blooming manhood was blasted by the withering hand of death, and he soon consigned to their last resting-place the mortal remains of his beloved wife. Shortly after he removed to the frontier settlements, and sought, by the dangers and excitements of a frontier life, to obliterate from memory the harrowing and afflictive scenes of his early life. He was a resident of the village at the time the Indians made their night attack, was there taken prisoner, firmly secured to prevent any possibility of escape; surrounded by a strong guard of Indian warriors, he was taken to the nearest Indian village, where they arrived soon after mid-day.

As some time had now elapsed since their descent upon the village, and the outrage had become known throughout the surrounding country, it became necessary, as a matter of prudence, that they should continue their flight unintercepted until they reached the heart of their settlements, where their increased numbers and superior knowledge of the locality would prove of vast advantage to them in a collision with the white settlers.

The Indians were all well mounted, and poor old Joe, deprived of a horse, nearly overcame by fatigue, and his mind nearly crazed from the recollection of the appalling scenes of the previous night, pinioned so tightly that the circulation of the blood was greatly impeded, and in some of his limbs entirely prevented, was compelled by his savage attendants and the frequent application of the lash, to keep up with the band.

To fail now would bring instant death upon him, so summoning to his assistance these qualities of patience, fortitude and endurance, which had never deserted

him through life, he renewed his efforts, and finally reached the Indian village, where a halt was ordered, completely prostrated and unable to proceed further.

His captors soon realized a sense of his situation, and the question of his disposition was paramount in their minds. To release him now would be to place the settlers upon their track. He was unable to travel further, and to make him captive would involve delay, and it was therefore determined that the chiefs and the warriors should assemble in council and decide upon his fate.

A courier was accordingly despatched to the wigwams of the warriors, and the council was soon assembled which was to decide upon the ultimate fate of old Joe.

Old Joe sat in the centre of the group upon the hide of a buffalo which had been stretched upon the ground for his accommodation, surrounded by the warriors of the various tribes, their eyes glistening with demonic fury, and their faces bedaubed with the hideous war-paint.

Big Thunder now arose to address the council, and the eyes of the warriors present were steadfastly fixed upon him. He was a chief of seventy years, and though he slightly bent beneath the weight of time, he still possessed all the haughtiness and dignity of a mighty warrior. His words, though few, were slowly and impressively delivered, and were as follows:

"Warriors! we have assembled to talk together, and to decide upon the fate of yonder pale-face. Shall to-morrow's sun shine upon him a free man returning to his people, or shall to-night's moon mingle its rays with his scalp, as it hangs upon the pole of the wigwam. You shall decide. I have spoken."

When he resumed his seat a cry arose, "To the stake with him!" "To the stake with him!" "Death to the pale-face!"

Ogeechee, a veteran warrior, then arose and spoke as follows:

"Warriors! you cry death to the pale-face. As the mountain echoes to the valley so do I, Ogeechee, cry death to the pale-face. Warriors! listen to my words, and if they fall upon you like an April shower, changing the cold and barren winter of vengeance into the genial spring of forgiveness, then shall Ogeechee's heart rejoice. If they fall upon you like hail, making winter more wintry, let them not chill your hearts against our captive. Warriors, when the prairies began to soften before the smile of spring, I set out upon a hunting expedition. The melting snows had swollen the mountain torrents and deluged the valleys. My route led me across a foaming torrent which dashed along with the speed of the untamed steed. In crossing, my foot slipped, and I was soon struggling with the flying waters. Warriors, my scars attest my bravery, and I have always beaten my enemy. I was conquered by the maddened waters. I remembered nothing more until I awoke from my sleep in the land of the Great Father, and found leaping over me the form of 'Old Joe,' our prisoner. But for him, Ogeechee would have gone to the land of the Great Spirit, and to the happy hunting grounds. Ogeechee is here—old Joe is here. My life was his—his life is mine. Shall it be said Ogeechee was ungrateful? Never! Warriors, I claim the life of the captive."

Ogeechee resumed his seat amid a painful silence, for his words had touched the Indian heart, perceiving which, Panther, an inveterate enemy of the white race, arose, and in words of fervent eloquence addressed the council:

"Warriors! the words of Ogeechee were like the breath of summer! Mine shall be like the blasts of winter! The words of Ogeechee fell upon your ears as gently as the falling leaf upon the softened earth. Mine shall be like arrows to pierce your hearts. Warriors, look around you. But a few moons back we roamed through our hunting-grounds, undisturbed. Now our Great Father has sent his pale-faces here, and we are driven on and on, like cattle before the lash of their master, until our hunting-grounds are gone, and the bones of our dead warriors bleach beneath the sun of Heaven! Our squaws, rent with the pangs of hunger, ask us for food. Where is our food now? When the pale-faces took our lands, they took our food upon those lands, and our squaws must die. The orb of day, when it rises above the tree-tops, gives promise of a beautiful day; but ere long, clouds and darkness may obscure its brightness. The golden promises of pay, which our Great Father gave us for the lands the pale-faces had stolen, have been overcast by the clouds of infidelity and neglect, and the rain-drops of want shower upon us. Warriors! we have unbent the tomahawk, the scalping-knife glistens by your side, and the war-paint is upon your faces. Shall you wash it off? Yes; but it shall be in the blood of the pale-faces. Your scalping-knives shall be sheathed, but it shall be in the hearts of your foes. The tomahawk shall be buried when the last pale-face shall have gone beyond the limits of our hunting-grounds, never

to return again. Shall the pale-face live, and, like a snake, poison the hand that spared him? No, let the pale-face die!"

Panther resumed his seat amid intense excitement, and an attempt was made by the young men to run off old Joe and summarily dispose of him, but the keen eyes of the old warriors discovered the movement, and it was frustrated. It was decided by the council that old Joe should be burnt at the stake within one hour from that time, as any further delay might endanger the safety of the band.

Joe received the news of his fate with an air of indifference and nonchalance that charmed the warriors, for no race of men so highly prize courage, and so truly despise cowardice, as your Indian braves.

He was firmly secured to a tree by thongs of buffalo-hide, and bundles of wood, which to him were the faggots of death, were piled around him. Everything was soon in readiness, the men had retired to their wigwams to prepare for the coming carnival of death, leaving a stout Indian to guard the captive, and it only required the presence of the chiefs as the signal to carry the execution into effect.

Ogeechee knew the unappeasing enmity of his companions against the white population, and though despairing of having any effect upon their minds, he determined to address them on behalf of old Joe, and by a recital of the obligation he was under to him, attempt to avert the doom which threatened him. His failure weighed heavily upon his spirits, but otherwise he betrayed no emotion, or exhibited any symptom of discontent, which would lead his associates to infer that he was dissatisfied at the result of the conference. He preserved that cold, stolid indifference which was a personal characteristic of him.

Shortly after the talk at the council had ended, and the men of the tribe had gone to their wigwams to prepare for the coming scene, Ogeechee hurried to the spot where old Joe was secured, strictly guarded by the warrior, who stood but a few paces to the rear, tomahawk in hand, ready to pounce upon the prisoner at the slightest manifestation of a desire to escape.

Approaching the sentinel, he spoke as follows:

"Malito, the war-paint upon thy face is faded and blurred. Go to thy wigwam, and return here with thy cheeks decked in colours for the war-path. I shall guard the captive, and here I shall await thy return."

Malito was only too anxious to avail himself of the opportunity, and hastened away. When he had departed, Ogeechee cut the thongs which secured the captive.

"Old Joe of the pale-face settlement," said he; "your road lies to the south, mine to the north. Fly like the eagle—Ogeechee is not ungrateful."

Old Joe grasped the hand of Ogeechee, and then fled into the woods. His limbs, rigid and paralyzed, the effects of the manner in which he was secured, necessarily retarded his flight, but he perseveringly pressed onward toward the goal of life and liberty, with all speed possible.

For a time fortune seemed to smile upon his efforts, and hope beat high within his breast, but escape from bondage was not to be purchased without a greater sacrifice.

The noise and tumult which arose from the direction of the Indian village informed him that his flight had already been discovered, and the pursuit commenced. This seemed to discourage him, but nevertheless he continued his flight, pressing onward with rapidity, keeping well within the shelter of the woods, and taking advantage of all the numerous streams that watered the country to conceal the vestiges of his trail.

At present the result depended upon the fleetness of the pursuers and the pursued, and old Joe, with his frontier experience, his frame hardened by the toils which had often beset his path, and inured to the hardships of the backwoodsman, was no idle game for the bloodhounds who were on his track. Before him, and dividing the woods where he then was from those beyond, was situated a level prairie of about one mile in width, and this old Joe was compelled to cross. He dreaded the result of his flight across this open land, but to hesitate would be madness, and he boldly started forward at an increased pace. Scarcely had he gone one-half the distance, when he discovered the form of Panther, mounted upon his horse, and flying toward the distant woodland, so as to surround him and prevent him from securing the cover of the woods.

Now the struggle became intense, but the advantage was with Joe, as Panther had to travel over four times the distance to circumvent him. Panther had not forgotten his rifle, and old Joe knew well the fame of the Indian warrior, whose unerring aim was a theme of universal comment throughout the settlements. He knew also that once within the range of that deadly weapon his life was valueless, and hence he watched with intense anxiety the gradual but sure approach of his savage pursuer. From the combined

effects of his revengeful spirit, and the excitement of the pursuit, the eyes of Panther glowed like living coals of fire.

To him the recapture of old Joe would be an exploit which would be hailed with rejoicing from his people. They would gather around him, the chiefs would thank him, and the people would shout his name. If they asked for old Joe, he would point to the dripping scalp upon his belt, and then the heavens would be rent with their shouts again. He urged on his flying steed to renewed efforts, until he had arrived within range of his flying enemy, and raising his rifle to his shoulder he drew the trigger, but the hard click of the hammer upon the nipple told that it was uncapped. Infuriated, he threw it from him, and drawing his tomahawk, with a yell continued the pursuit, but blinded with passion, he did not perceive a sudden rise in the prairie, and his horse coming in contact therewith stumbled, and threw his rider with a fearful force over his head. His neck was dislocated by the fall, causing immediate death, and a mangled mass of human clay only remained of the once brave and haughty warrior.

Old Joe soon reached the cover of the woods, and after many days of weary journeying, he at length reached the settlements in safety, greatly overcome by fatigue, and much to the surprise and gratification of the settlers who thought he had suffered the fate that had been meted out to the unhappy inhabitants of the village.

Ogeechee, after old Joe had fled, determined not to survive his treachery to his people, plunged his knife into his manly bosom, and the heart of Ogeechee soon ceased to beat for ever. In this position he was discovered by the warriors, who attributed his death to the cunning of old Joe, and he was buried with all the pomp and circumstance attending the funeral rites of an Indian brave. His memory is sacredly revered by the white settlers, to whom old Joe related the history of his captivity, for they truly know how fathomless are the depths of an Indian's revenge and an Indian's gratitude.

D.

THE CENSUS.

A PARLIAMENTARY paper, giving the general results of the census of 1861, has just been published. After describing the means taken to obtain accurate returns of the population, the return proceeds to describe the principal results obtained under the following heads:—

1. PERSONS ABSENT FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM.

The people of these islands are more movable than other nations, and large numbers of them are always abroad, generally in ships at sea, in the great commercial entrepôts, in the capitals of Europe, in our colonies, or in the States of America.

The army and navy and merchant seamen abroad exceed a quarter of a million (250,356) of whom 162,273 belonged by birth to England and Wales. The number of the British subjects, including the Scotch and Irish abroad, was 67,969. This number does not include the English in America, in India, or in the colonies, neither does it include any of the English in France, except those who were domiciled. Upon the other hand, some of the people born at the Mediterranean stations were inscribed in the consular registers as British subjects; but, as a general rule, the Maltese and Ionians are excluded from the list.

France is the country to which the English most resort in Europe, and 25,844 are domiciled there; 4,092 are returned in Belgium, 827 in Holland, 1,124 in Switzerland, 7,365 in Germany, 5,467 in Italy, including Rome, 2,072 in Portugal, and 3,879 in Spain, 525 in Greece, 2,360 in Turkey, and 931 in Egypt; in Denmark, 372; in Norway, 242; and in Sweden, 411; in Russia, 3,749. Passing to Asia, 39 of her Majesty's subjects were returned in Persia, 1,072 in China, 81 in Japan, and 24 in Siam. The English population in India, according to the best returns, amounted to 125,379, including the English army, 85,008 strong. 340 English people are in the empire of Morocco. Algeria and the rest of Africa make no return. Central America returns 145 English; Ecuador, 27; Chili, 4,152, of whom 3,265 are males, chiefly miners, and Brazil, 2,838.

The numbers of each of the two sexes returned abroad did not greatly differ, as the males were 36,734, and the females 31,235. In France and Belgium, the women exceeded the men in number, and in Germany there was little difference. The girls at school probably affect this result. In China, Japan, Chili, Brazil, and India, the men preponderated largely.

The natives of England in the United States exceed the numbers in all other countries. The numbers of the inhabitants of each state in 1860 who were born in this kingdom, amounted in the aggregate to 2,224,743; of whom it was ascertained that 477,455 were born in England and Wales, 108,518 in Scotland, and 1,611,304 in Ireland; 27,466 were described

simply as born in the United Kingdom. In addition to these numbers, 249,970 were born in British America, and 1,419 in Australia.

The foreigners in England and Wales numbered 84,090, or, exclusive of those from the United States, 76,229.

2. POPULATION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM.

The population of the United Kingdom in 1851 was 27,745,949. The increase, which has been so great in Ireland up to the era of Catholic Emancipation, ceased after 1841; and the population emigrated in large numbers to new fields of industry, so that the increase in the United Kingdom was found in the 10 years ending in 1851 to be less than it had been in any previous decennial since the first census was taken. Only 709,499 people were added to the population in ten years. In the ten years following, at least 2,054,578 British emigrants sailed from the ports at which accounts are kept; still the census showed an increase of 1,575,339 people; making the aggregate population of the United Kingdom, including its army, navy, and merchant seamen abroad, 29,321,288, being an increase at the rate of 5.68 per cent. in the ten years, and of .553 per cent. annually.

That out of ten parts of the population of the country, nearly seven belong to England and Wales, two to Ireland, one to Scotland, and a small fraction (1-20th) to the Channel Islands. The population of England and Wales, including the army, navy and merchant seamen abroad, was 20,228,497.

3. INCREASE OF THE POPULATION IN ENGLAND AND WALES.

The increase of the population of England and Wales since the last census was 2,174,327. The increase was at the rate of 12 per cent. in 10 years; or 1.41 annually.

The emigrants of English origin in the last ten years amounted to 640,316, which makes the numerical increase since the census of 1851 to be 2,814,643.

The increase in the ten years of the numbers of the Scotch and Irish in England was 120,790, which has, however, to be reduced by the increase of the Englishmen in Scotland and Ireland. The number of persons in England born abroad increased by 63,429 in the ten years; but this is counterbalanced again by the increase of Englishmen abroad, exclusive of the recorded emigrants. If the whole of the increase of the 184,219 persons in England, born out of England, born out of its limits, be struck off, the natural increase recorded becomes 2,630,424.

4. MALES AND FEMALES.

The boys born in England are in the proportion of 104,811 to 100,000 girls; but they experience a higher rate of mortality, the men and women living, of all ages, being in the proportion of 100,029 to 100,000. At the census 10,289,965 females and 9,770,259 females were enumerated. There was an excess of 518,706 women at home; or, deducting 162,273 from their number on account of their husbands and of other men in the army, navy, and merchant service abroad, the difference is reduced to 351,433 women at home; the men of the corresponding ages being on the continent, in the colonies, or in foreign lands.

To 100,000 women, of all ages, in England, there are 95,008 men, of all ages, at home, or, including a due proportion (1,577) of the army, navy, and merchant seamen abroad, 96,585, leaving 3,415 of the absent unaccounted for. The proportion of men to women at home is less than it was in 1851, owing probably to the increase of the army abroad.

There is an excess of boys over girls living under the ages of 15; and by the life table an excess of men is provided all through the middle period of life; but that surplus is overdrawn by emigration, so that the women exceed the men in number to a considerable extent in the early and middle, and still more in the advanced ages, when their longevity comes into play.

The excess of the emigration of males over females accounts for the present difference in the proportions of the sexes.

5. HOUSES AND PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS.

The ascertained houseless class amounted to 15,764 on the 31st of March, 1851; and 11,444 on the 8th of April, 1861.

In 1861 also 11,915 persons lived in barges, 6,665 in inland vessels in ports, and 55,765 persons in seagoing vessels in the ports of England and Wales. Of the whole class of the population, including those in vessels, out of fixed dwellings, 75,188 were males, and 10,601 were females.

26,096 criminals were in prisons; 24,845 lunatics were in asylums; 10,414 patients were in hospitals; 125,727 of the poor and infirm were in workhouses, and 23,598 inmates in the principal charitable institutions and asylums. There were 63,840 soldiers in barracks. In 1,684 public institutions of various kinds were 37,778 officers and servants, with their families, in addition to the special inmates.

The great mass of the population was enumerated in houses. The inhabited houses in England amounted in 1861 to 3,739,505, showing since the last census an increase of 461,466. The great difference in these houses is shown by their annual value. Thus 519,991 houses are returned at rentals varying from £20 to £20,000 a-year; or at £52.8 on an average. 3,219,514 householders or more than six in seven, pay no house duty; and the annual value can only be estimated approximately. The average rent of houses at rents under £20 a-year is £9.5; and the mean annual value of all the houses in England is £15.5 (£15 and 5 florins).

The annual value of all the houses at this rate is £58,013,181, of which £7,159,000 is due to the 461,466 new houses erected in the last ten years. At 15 years' purchase the dwelling-houses erected in ten years are worth £107,000,000; and all the houses standing in 1861 are worth £870,000,000.

184,694 houses were uninhabited, and 27,305 were building in 1861. To 1,000 houses inhabited there were 49 uninhabited and seven building. The number of "houses building" was 27,305, or in the proportion of one house building to 137 inhabited and to seven uninhabited.

The number of inhabited houses was 3,739,505, and on an average there were 537 persons to 100 houses, making the proportion 537 to a house, or nearly 16 persons to 100 houses.

If the 357,582 persons in 1,684 institutions and ships are excluded, the persons to an inhabited house are reduced to 5.26. The proportion of persons to 100 inhabitants houses has gradually decreased from 575 in 1821 to 537 in 1861. This is a satisfactory movement, for the isolation of families in separate dwellings is in every way salutary.

Of 48,273 houses, institutions excluded,—2,417 were uninhabited; 1,601 houses contained one person in each, or 1,501 inhabitants; 5,361 contained two inhabitants in each house, or 10,722 in the aggregate; 6,627 houses contained three inhabitants in each house; 7,048 houses (the maximum) contained four inhabitants in each house. The numbers then gradually decline. Each of 25,319 houses contained five or more people; 4,465 contained 10 or more people; 1,389 contained 15 or more; 596 contained 20 or more; and 142 contained 30 or more inhabitants.

While more than half of the houses contain five or more inmates, more than half of the inhabitants live in houses containing seven or more inmates.

6. FAMILIES.

The number of families was 4,491,524; and the proportion of persons to a family was 447 persons to 100 families; 447 persons to 1 family, or nearly 9 persons to 2 families. The proportion of persons to a family varied from 4.69 in 1801 to 4.63 in 1851. And the reduction of the proportion to 4.47 in 1861 is fairly referable to the multiplication of families by the recognition of lodgers as constituents of the class. If the 1,684 institutions and their inmates and persons out of houses (397,582) are excluded from the calculation, the proportion of persons to a family will be reduced to 4.38. There were 12 families to 10 houses.

Three classes of families were distinguished: the first has at its head a husband and wife; the second has a widower or a widow at its head; and the third has a bachelor or spinster at its head. The head of the family was absent in 3,163 instances out of 63,031; and of 61,868 families 41,526 had the husband and wife at their head; 11,099 had a widower or widow, and 9,243 had a bachelor or spinster at their head. About two-thirds of the existing families consisted of married couples; 6,487 were alone; and of the rest 31,896 had one or more children.

The number of children resident with their parents was 93,788; and there were 2.26 children on an average to each family, or 4.26 children and parents, including the father and mother to each family of this class. Striking off the families consisting of husband and wife, sole, there remain 31,896 pairs having with them at home 93,788 children—that is, 2.94 children to a family, or 4.94 children and parents to a family. A fourth part of the families had four children or more at home; and these families of parents and children consisted of seven persons on an average. The families of which widowers or widows were the heads, had children connected with them in 6,677 out of 11,099 cases.

The facts respecting Scotland and Ireland are discussed separately by commissioners for those parts of the United Kingdom.

A DESPERATE RUFFIAN.—In the Tyrol a husband and wife were fighting, when a man who rushed to separate them was shot dead by the former. Two gendarmes attempted to secure the murderer, who killed one of them and wounded the other. A neighbour got on to the roof to watch the murderer, and was shot dead as he looked through a hole in the roof.

The man was then barricaded in his house. As no one would now venture to risk his life in the attempt to make the capture, two small cannon were brought and two shots were sent against the house, followed by a volley from small arms. The murderer now sought refuge in the chimney, whence, after much resistance, he was dragged by the crowd.

THE MIDNIGHT GUEST.

CHAPTER I.

It wanted five minutes of twelve o'clock, and I sat in my little study, waiting for the arrival of my old schoolmate Hugh—or, as we used to call him then, "Hewey"—Dawson.

"It is sixteen years since we have met," I said to myself; "what does he look like, I wonder! A round-faced, black-eyed, jet-black curly-haired, square-built young chap he was, sixteen years ago. And a queer genius too! For that matter, he must be queerer than ever now, to judge by the letter in which, after sixteen years' silence and absence, he suddenly announces his visit. Here it is. I'll read it again:

"Liverpool, Aug. —, 186—.

"MY DEAR FELLOW,—You'll be considerably surprised, but, I hope, rather pleased, to learn by this letter that in twenty days from this date, at twelve o'clock, midnight, or within ten minutes thereof, I shall arrive at your domicile and become your guest for a time not yet determined on. I shall come alone, and expect to see you alone!

"Your possibly forgotten schoolmate and chum,
"HUGH DAWSON."

That's all! Not a word about his long silence! Not an allusion to the fact that we have totally lost sight and reckoning of each other for so many years! Upon my soul, it is very strange, even for him! There goes midnight! And he expects to see me alone! Well, unless he objects to the old woman and the young man who share the labours of my small "bachelor's hall" between them, he certainly will be gratified. I live alone. I have lived alone ever since my mother went to Heaven, ten years ago!

Five minutes after twelve! Perhaps he—no! there he is, by Jove! The cab has stopped, and there goes the bell!

"How are you, Ned! Up to time, you see. Here, caddy, handle that box gingerly. Heavy, is it? Well, it is, rather. All right! Here's your fare. Come in, Ned, and give me a bite to eat. You can do your staring while I am bolting the food!"

I was staring at him, that's a fact; for, apart from the oddity of his speech and manner, I almost doubted if the tall, heavy-shouldered, gaunt-framed man before me, could be the chubby-faced, squab-figured Hewey Dawson of the olden years.

We went into the study, where a small table was laid with supper.

"Sixteen years, Ned, do change a man, don't they?" said he, throwing off his slouch-hat, and sitting down without ceremony at the table. "But you don't show them much, old fellow!" he added, helping himself, and beginning to eat like a hungry man.

An old tone in his voice somewhat restored my equanimity, and we soon became engaged in familiar chat.

"Stop!" cried he, suddenly; "what's that row in the hall?"

"It's only Martha and Sam carrying up your baggage," said I. That box, I suspect, is rather—"

"By—!" exclaimed Hugh, with strange earnestness, springing up as he spoke; "I must see to that!"

He stepped quickly into the hall, and as quickly returned, carrying, with considerable difficulty, the box alluded to which he set carefully down on a chair.

It was not a large box, though it seemed so heavy. About 18 by 12 inches square, I thought as I looked at it, made of some very dark wood, and bound with bands of bronzed iron or steel.

"You may well look at it," said Dawson, catching the direction of my gaze. "All my fortune is in that box, my boy. Most of it in hard cash too!"

Just as he uttered those last words, Sam, my waiter and male factotum, opened the door and said—"The room's all ready, sir;" then looking at the box, he nodded at it, and added, "Shall I carry it up, sir? I'm very strong."

"No!" answered Dawson, quickly, before I could speak. "Let it be. I'll see to it myself."

The young man bowed and withdrew.

When he was gone, Dawson stepped to the door, locked it, and taking the key from his pocket, approached the box, saying:

"Look here, Ned. Here's something for eyes to gloat over. Pshaw, man!" he added, laughing, yet it seemed to me in a forced manner, as I hesitated, mechanically, an instant; "I am not afraid of your murdering and robbing me for a few paltry thousands!"

I hardly knew whether to echo his laugh or to feel hurt at his strange words; but I went up to the box and looked in. It was more than half-occupied by little bags, several of which Dawson rapidly opened and displayed their contents. They seemed to be filled with gold coin of a foreign stamp, some French and some Austrian, or Prussian, or Russian, I could not tell which in the transient look I had of them. There was nothing else in the box but a portfolio, apparently gorged with papers. He closed it again a moment afterwards, and bade me "Come, sit down, and help finish the bottle (it was champagne) before we went to bed."

"What on earth makes you carry your money about in that strange and dangerous way, Dawson?" I asked, as we hobnobbed together.

"Oh!" he replied, carelessly, "it's a whim of mine. I was always queer, you remember." Then, after a pause, he added, more seriously, "The fact is, I haven't seen a good chance to invest it yet. I couldn't, or I wouldn't leave it abroad, and I've only just arrived. Besides,"—a shadow fell upon his face, and he stopped abruptly. Then he continued, smiling, "It's that very thing I've come to consult you about, Ned. I want you to advise me what to do with this money. And till we've decided, I want you to keep it for me; be my bank, you know."

"But you had much better deposit it in some—" "No!" interrupted Dawson. "That's another whim of mine perhaps; but I don't like 'moneyed institutions.' I don't want to have anything to do with them; and I won't, that's flat."

"Well, Dawson," said I, finally, "you must give me time to think about this. To-morrow we will talk further about it. Meantime—"

"Meantime, let us go to bed," rejoined Hugh. "I am dreadfully sleepy; the bottle's empty, and it's near two o'clock. Allons! adieu me up."

And he prepared to shoulder the box once more. This time, however, I insisted upon helping him, and we carried it between us to his chamber, where I bade him "good-night," and left him to repose.

For myself, it was long ere I fell asleep. My thoughts wandered from one point to another; on the strange arrival of Dawson, his abrupt manner, and eccentric notions. I went over in my mind the brief abstract he had given me, as I supposed, of his past and recent life. Years of travel in the East and the West, a soldier, a sailor, by turns. Then more recently, a volunteer with the French army in Italy, an *attaché* (in what precise capacity he did not say) of the French Embassy at St. Petersburg, and lastly, an aider and abettor in the Polish insurrection. His money "picked up here and there, in handfuls or single pieces, as the case might be," he said, and this was all the explanation he offered on that head.

What should I do about his strange request? I really could not assume such a responsibility! Besides, it was absolutely dangerous to have such a sum in the house! I believed my servants honest. But who knows what temptation might not do?

Did Dawson sleep with weapons, I wondered? Where did he put the box? Could he slumber tranquilly with his whole fortune thus exposed? In taverns and strange places, for instance. Of course, he was secure enough now. But I should like to take a look at him, just to see if his sleep was calm and untroubled. Suppose I went quietly and peeped in at him? His door might be locked, though. Yes, it was locked, no doubt. Well, to-morrow—to-morrow—here I lost the train of thought, and gradually fell off into a quiet slumber.

The last external sensation I was conscious of was hearing the clock of the neighbouring church strike four.

CHAPTER II.

I AWOKE, suddenly, with a start, as if something—a noise, a touch, a footstep, a cry, had roused me. I listened, half-dreamily. All was perfectly still. The sun was but a little way over the horizon, and a heavy mist hung over the earth. I turned again to sleep; but a singular impulse that I could not, and cannot now account for, prompted me to go and try to get a look at Dawson. I thought anew of the probability of his door being fastened. But the impulse grew stronger and stronger. It amounted to an actual force, pushing me, as it were, in that direction. I arose, slipped on my dressing-gown, and went out into the corridor. The morning light was still dim and uncertain within the house. I advanced noiselessly to Dawson's room door and placed my hand on the knob. To my surprise, the door yielded to my touch. It was not even latched. I entered, and beheld my guest lying in an apparently calm and deep slumber within the bed. The corner where the bed was stood in shadow, and I could not see with perfect distinctness; but that my eccentric friend was wrapped in a remarkably quiet sleep seemed evident. His treasure-box, too, reposed in safety upon a chair by

the bed-head, shut and padlocked, as when he placed it there.

After listening a moment, therefore, for a groan or a movement, and hearing nothing—not even the sound of the sleeper's breathing, so apparently soft and child-like was his rest, I went cautiously back to my own chamber, and, returning to bed, addressed myself once more to sleep.

But sleep would not come, court it how I might. A vague, inexplicable restlessness possessed me. As the morning gradually brightened with the ascending sun, this uneasiness increased to such a degree, that I could lie abed no longer. I arose and dressed. The church clock struck eight just as I was prepared to leave the room.

As I opened my door, and stepped into the entry, I was suddenly confronted by Sam, who rushed swiftly out of Mr. Dawson's chamber towards me. He was evidently labouring under dreadful agitation. His eyes seemed to protrude from his head, so much of their dull white orb was visible; his face was of that ghastly hue peculiar to persons of his colour in moments of great terror, and he trembled all over.

"Oh, sir! oh, Mr. Black! he's—he's—gone!" stammered the man, in a hoarse whisper, pointing over his shoulder to the room he had just quitted.

"Gone!" cried I, finding speech at last. "What in Heaven's name do you mean? What's the matter with you?"

"I—I—I—I just went t-t-to ask him if he wanted anything, sir. I didn't t-t-touch him, Mr. Black, sir, till he wouldn't answer me; and—'an'—'an' then I went up 'an'—oh! he was clean gone, sir! As I'm a l-l-livin' sinner it's true! I never—oh! I never t-t—"

I pushed him hastily aside, and ran into the chamber of my midnight guest.

Fool! fool! what did he mean by his gibbering about "gone!" There lay Hugh Dawson, sleeping as peacefully as ever. I went up to the bed, and tapping him on the shoulder:

"Come, Dawson," I cried; "hurry up! I smell breakfast!"

He neither answered nor moved.

"Why, man," exclaimed I, giving him a vigorous shake, "I could rob you and murder you, as you said last night, and you never the wiser, if you sleep at this rate!"

The sleeper was still unmoved. A strange feeling came upon me, and I stooped to look in the face. The instant I did so I started back in horror. His eyes were wide open and fixed with a glassy stare upon vacancy.

Gracious Heaven! Hugh Dawson was dead! His treasure-chest stood seemingly untouched by his side. His clothes, his watch, his shirt-trinkets lay on the bureau. In his coat-pocket was found his pocket-book, well filled.

Not the slightest trace of a wound could be discovered upon his person. Yet he was dead!

There was but one thing that gave colour to a suspicion of foul play, and that only added one mystery more to the darkness that enveloped the tragedy. This circumstance was, that the key of the strong-box was missing. The minutest search failed to bring it to light. It was—I recollected well—a small, bright, steel key. But it was gone!

CHAPTER III.

THE proper authorities were summoned, and after hearing the evidence, and examining both the chamber of the deceased, his person and effects, and the rest of the house, they considered it their duty to arrest Sam upon suspicion of an attempt to commit robbery. Of murder there was not the shadow of evidence to warrant an accusation.

Sam's agitation and confusion told heavily against him, and I rather suspected him myself of having purloined the key of the strong-box, with the design of appropriating some of its contents, when he was interrupted by the opening of my door. This was also the belief of the officers of justice.

In the course of the investigation it was deemed necessary to open the box of treasure, and the key having disappeared, it was broken open, not without difficulty. Here a new mystery was discovered. The bags of gold were all, as far as could be judged, intact. But the portfolio and its contents were gone!

I pray to Heaven I may never pass such another terrible week as that during which the official investigations were held upon the melancholy mystery that hung over my old schoolfellow and recent guest's strange death in my house.

On the fourth day a glimmer of light fell upon us. Old Martha, in sweeping out the chamber occupied by poor Dawson, removed the fire-screen. Behind it she found a small heap of cinders, such as burnt paper leaves, and among them a tiny clasp of inlaid steel and gold, which I immediately identified as belonging to my friend's missing portfolio.

The inference was, so far, clear. He himself, or some one else, had burned portfolio and papers in the chimney at some moment between his retiring to bed and the discovery of his death next morning.

It was not till the ninth day that the idea was suddenly suggested (this may appear strange, but I write fact, and fact, we know, is stranger than fiction) of a *post-mortem* examination. It was immediately adopted and ordered to be carried into execution.

My unfortunate friend's remains were disinterred, and scientifically examined.

The result was another, a broader, a double gleam of light on the mystery.

First, in his stomach was found the key of the strong box! Second, it became evident by the tests applied that he had died by poison! A new question here arose: Did he commit suicide, or was he poisoned by another hand than his own?

Matters began to look bad for Sam, who, though exonerated from the charge of poisoning the key, was now perhaps to be re-arrested as a prisoner. The poor fellow, on hearing of this new phase in the affair, nearly died outright of terror. He was, however, liberated, but kept in surveillance. Being wholly unable to perform his domestic duties in my house, I had to provide another in his place. By a fortunate chance I obtained a shrewd, quick-witted, active Swiss, who had been some years in this country and spoke English well. His name was Paul.

The thirteenth day had now arrived without throwing any additional light upon the dark question respecting the death of Dawson, and the investigation dragged fruitlessly along in the twilight, when, as he placed my solitary dinner on the table, Paul said to me:

"I ask your pardon, Monsieur Black, but I think—I have found something."

"Ha! What is it?" Where did you find it? Let me see it!" I exclaimed, instantly connecting the discovery with the distressing mystery that was tormenting me.

"I ask your pardon, monsieur," replied Paul; "but you know, since I have been in your service, now three days only, I have, as is the custom, taken the care of the chambers out of the hands of Martha."

But what have you found?" interrupted I, impatiently.

"I ask your pardon, monsieur, but I beg you will let me explain. Please to let me explain!"

I resigned myself, and bade him go on.

"This morning," resumed Paul, "in putting the room of—the deceased gentleman in order, as I drew the lower mattress off the bed, something white caught my eye, sticking, as it were, against the head-board, in the corner just behind the bolster. I reached down and picked it up. It was a sheet of note-paper, very thin, and folded up quite small. On the outside leaf there was an address—"

"Where is it? Give it to me!" I cried, unable longer to restrain myself.

"I ask your pardon, monsieur! It is here," and he handed me the paper.

My hands trembled violently, as, after glancing at the address, "To my old chum, Ned Black," I opened the sheet and read as follows:

"Good-bye, old fellow. I shall be dead before you see this. I am going to poison myself with a poison contained in a capsule which I have had prepared abroad for the purpose. When I told you I came to get your advice about my money, I lied. I came to die, and leave it to you. One of my whims, you know. I have not a relative on earth. So don't refuse it. Now for it. I'm going to die because I'm disgusted with myself. Here's the truth in a nutshell. I got that gold for turning traitor and betraying the cause I had sworn to fight for. I did, by—! And not once, but over and over again. Poor Poland! I shan't go into details. Time is short. I have burnt the portfolio, because it contained the proofs of my villainy. And I am going to swallow the key of the box, so that you'll have to open me to get it, and so find the truth of my assertion about the poison. I am much obliged to you, Ned, for your kind welcome. If you had known the truth, you'd have kicked me out of your house. No matter. It's all right now. Good-bye. I've swallowed the key, and here goes the poison. These are my last whims in this world. The clock has just struck three!"

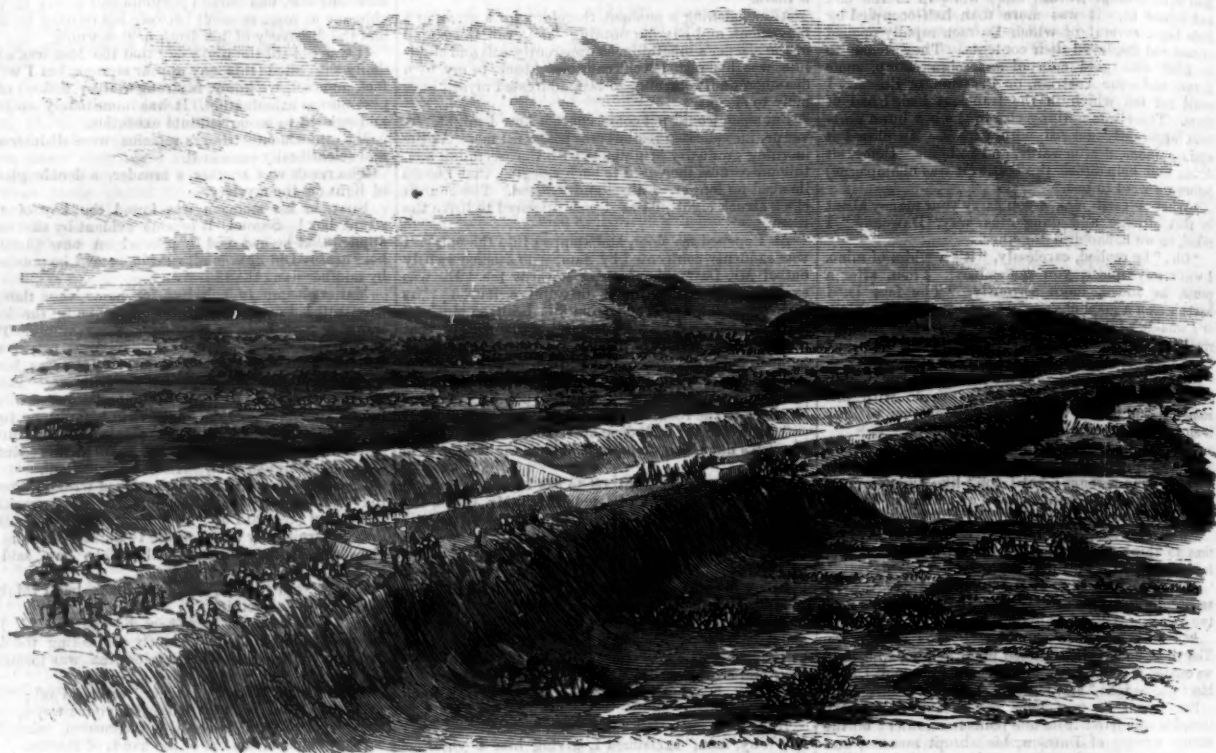
"HUGH DAWSON."

There were three thousand pounds in the box. I shall not touch it.

Sam is cleared of all suspicion, but his nerves were so shattered by the shock he endured that he has gone away into the country to work on a farm.

I have regained in a great degree my usual calmness of mind, and Paul and I got on capitally together. But I never shall pass that chamber-door without a shudder, nor can I ever recall without horror (though mingled with pity now and henceforth) the fearful tragedy enacted within it by my MIDNIGHT GUEST.

C. D. G.



[THE DANNEWERK.]

THE DANNEWERK.

DENMARK relies with great confidence on the strength of the fortified position called the Dannewerk to offer a successful resistance to the invasion of Schleswig by the Prussian and Austrian forces. Schleswig, Holstein, and Jutland form a peninsula 300 miles long, and in some parts 100 miles in breadth; and the Dannewerk (i.e., the *chef-d'œuvre*, or work, in a superlative sense, of the Danes) stretches right across this peninsula in the shape of a series of enormous earth-banks, extending from the southern boundary of Schleswig, close up to the little capital which gives its name to the duchy.

The town of Schleswig is situated on the river Schley, which is a long inlet of the Baltic; and its name, Schleyswick, or Schleswig, means the town built on the river Schley. It is a Lilliputian metropolis of a Lilliputian territory; its population being only 11,000, whilst that of the entire duchy only reaches some 40,000. On this Lilliput have the two Brobdingnagian military powers of Germany, Prussia and Austria directed their forces.

Although the Dannewerk properly so-called forms only one of the three immense ramparts or earth-walls which constitute the entire fortification of Schleswig, it gives its name to the whole series. It is a structure of extreme antiquity, and was, it is conjectured, built at some unknown period by the original inhabitants of the country, as a defence against the inundations of the sea and the incursions of invaders.

In the year 987, the earth-wall of the Dannewerk was rebuilt by Queen Thyrn, and for this patriotic act the people named her Danabod, i.e., "the pride of the Danes." At this period, it is said, the wall extended eight miles across the country, and to have reached from the Selker lake adjoining the river on which the capital stands, to the river Treene, near Hollingstedt, toward the west of the peninsula, fortresses being erected at regular intervals along its entire length, and a ditch 10 feet deep running throughout.

The Dannewerk now consists essentially of three separate earth-walls, works of tremendous extent and strength, and which the best engineers admit to be almost impregnable. The Russian war afforded us in the Crimea some experience of the value of earth-works; and it is said that, by a series of experiments recently carried on by orders from Copenhagen, to test the resisting power of ramparts formed of different materials, it was shown that neither granite nor any other kind of wall could resist cannon-shot so effectually as the rude old earthworks erected by barbarians ages before the science of war was known.

The portion of the Dannewerk extending towards the east is called the "Oster-wolden," or eastern rampart; and towards the west coast extends the "Krum-wolden," or crooked rampart, together with the slanting rampart of the Dannewerk proper, the greater part of which is called Valdemar's wall. These ramparts consist of enormous mounds of earth, and are essentially dykes, arranged in shape something like the mouth of a funnel, so as to drive any invading force into the narrowest channel, at which point a formidable *tête-du-pont*, called the "Bruckenkopf," would render it almost impossible for any body of troops to force a passage.

The east rampart is designed to drive an approaching enemy towards the great lake formed by the river Schley, which is here so broad and so well protected by forts, that it would be useless for an enemy to attempt crossing there; while, at the narrower part, there exists, on the opposite shore, the formidable Margrethen wall. Immediately below the bay on which Schleswig stands, are the two great Selker lakes; and on the other side of these, there is a very strong fortified position, called the Half-Circle, whose guns would make it extremely hazardous for any troops to be able to land there. Another strong defence is called the "Kur-graben," or Prince Elector's ditch, an earthwork which stretches in a straight connecting line from the Selker lake to Valdemar's wall.

The Kurgraben rampart is upwards of four miles long, from 10 to 12 feet broad, and from 12 to 16 feet high. The Oster-wolden, or eastern rampart, is two miles in length, 6 feet high, and 16 paces broad at the top, with a ditch 10 feet deep. The Dannewerk proper is fourteen miles long, and from 30 to 36 feet high, whilst its breadth on the top ranges from 16 to 20 feet. It is strengthened by fourteen forts; and at Bustorf, where the roads from the north of the country emerge, the forts are mounted with guns of 200-pounds calibre, and the works surrounded by palisades.

These earth-works, or ramparts, it will thus be seen, constitute a very formidable means of defence; but perhaps the chief element of their strength is in the flooding apparatus which is connected with them. By the use of sluices, it is asserted that no less than sixty-four square miles, or nine-tenths of the land in front of these earth-works, can be overflowed, and the invaders driven to find a passage over the remaining portion of the country, where the strongest fortresses are situated, and, being mounted with the largest cannon, will assuredly give an enemy a warm reception.

By way of experiment, the sluice-gates were recently opened, and the whole land inundated; and, as the thermometer was then 16 degrees below zero,

an enormous waste of ice speedily appeared. No sooner, however, was the ice formed, than the water beneath was discharged, and only a thin frozen pellicle left for troops to flounder through. Consequently, the Danes assert that the flooding apparatus is equally serviceable summer and winter; and it would seem that they have good reason for their confidence in it, for it is certain that a thin surface of unsupported ice would be at least as formidable an obstacle to a body of enemy's troops as the water itself.

The Danish officers have no doubt as to the security of their position, and the troops have been energetically at work for some time in increasing the strength of it. It is said that at a grand review of the Danish troops, some short time ago, a Prussian general who was present admitted that it would require an army of 100,000 men to force the earthworks; but, on the other hand, the fortifications are of such an enormous extent that he says 40,000 men would be necessary for the defence of the works. The Danes have not probably half this number of men in the whole of Schleswig; but they have constructed a railway behind the Dannewerk, which, by affording the means of transporting troops from one point to another, will enable them to make the best use of the limited number of its defenders.

The commander-in-chief of the Danish army at the Dannewerk is General De Meza, who has achieved for himself the reputation of being the ablest soldier that Denmark has produced for many years; and should the Austrians and Prussians succeed in getting in front of his guns, they will surely find that they have (to use an American phrase) placed themselves in "a tight place." They found their progress in Holstein to be only a military promenade. They entered Kiel and took possession of the duchy almost without seeing a Danish soldier; and they pushed their forces across the Elbe and entered the Duchy of Schleswig with only the semblance of opposition by the Danish outposts. Here the first cannon shots were fired, and the war really commenced. Unless the Danes are completely changed in their national character, the German invaders will meet with a brave, resolute, and sanguinary resistance. Evidence of this has, indeed, been promptly afforded; for the enemy having advanced in force against Eckenförde, the Danes took up a position on the Schley, and occupied the works near Miesunde, which were attacked by the Germans on the 2nd inst., but although their assaults lasted from ten a.m. till four p.m. of that day, the works remained in possession of the gallant Danes.



A YOUNG GIRL FROM THE COUNTRY.

By VANE IRETON ST. JOHN,

Author of "The Queen of Night," "In Spite of the World," &c.

CHAPTER LII.

Do you doubt love? Then think upon the time
When the clear depths of thy yet hushed soul
Were ruffled with troublings of strange joy,
As if some unseen visitant from Heaven
Touched the calm lake and wreathed its images
In sparkling waves; recall the dallying hope
That on the margin of assurance trembled,
As loth to lose in certainty too blessed
Its happy being: taste in thought again
Of the stolen sweetness of those evening walks.

Jon.

Pushing aside the constables, in spite of their expostulations, Ralph Conyers rushed to his mother's side.

He had heard nothing of the doings at Milton Hall. Bad news, they say, travels fast, but on this occasion, at least, the saying was wrong; for only the faintest rumour of the Castleton slander had reached London.

"Mother, dear mother!" he cried, "what is this? Why are you here?"

Laura smiled.
"This is the beginning of the end," she said.

Further conversation for the moment was interrupted.

A constable placed a heavy hand on Ralph's shoulder.

"Come, sir," he said, "this won't do. Who are you, and what do you want?"

Ralph eyed him disdainfully.

"I am this lady's son," he said, "and I desire to speak with her."

"Well, you might have said so without almost knocking me down," returned the man, "I must see the governor, and ask if you can go to her cell."

"Cell!"

The word sounded chill and dreary.

His mother in a cell—his mother, who had wandered through life along a dreary, thorny path for his sake only.

Ralph, however, knew the bad policy of offending the dignity of the law in the person of its most menial upholders.

He placed a crown in the man's hand.

"Be kind enough to urge this matter forward," he said. "I wish very much to see my mother; and this is the first I have heard of her arrest."

[RETURN OF THE CONVICT DEATHSON.]

The man's manner was of course changed immediately.

"Certainly, sir," he said, "but come, madam," he added, turning respectfully to Laura. "I must first lead you in."

The preliminaries were soon settled, and Ralph and his mother were suffered to be alone.

She soon explained all that happened.

"This day," she proceeded, "has been my third examination. They have decided not to await your father's recovery, but to take the evidence already in hand."

"And when will this absurd, yet infamous trial take place?"

"In one month."

"You have no fear of the result?"

Laura smiled.

"With your evidence and the evidence of others in my favour, there should be no doubt: and yet the son of this woman, craven as he is, may pluck up courage to destroy me."

"What can he say?"

"Much—far too much—because he is willing to perjure himself."

"But he can know nothing."

"He knows nothing, it is true: yet he stated publicly in court to-day that he saw me walking along the corridor, towards my husband's room, at eight o'clock."

"The lying knave," cried Ralph Conyers; "why, you were with me at a quarter past eight, and the train must have left Thornton at a quarter to eight. Fear nothing, mother, I will collect evidence enough to crush them."

Laura smiled.

"Dear Ralph, let me ask you one favour."

"What is it? Depend upon it it is granted ere asked."

"Appear in court as Ralph Conyers: not as Granby Saville."

"Why?"

"Because I desire it: when the day arrives, you will recognize my motive."

At this moment the constable entered.

"Time is up, sir," he said.

Through the open door came loud and frantic yells, as from a maniac.

Laura instinctively clasped her hands in terror.

"What is that?" asked Ralph.

"Oh, it's only a mad prisoner; but a queer sort of a fellow, and has a queer name. They say he was connected with some murder here, many years ago. It was he who burned down the church."

Laura glanced at her son, who turned deadly pale.

"What is the man's name?" he asked.

"John Shadow!"

With a wild cry Laura Conyers fell upon her knees on the floor.

"Thank God!" she murmured; "I am saved—I am saved!"

Ralph raised her up.

"Mother," he said, "you are safe without him. But give not way to extravagant joy; for this man, though found, is mad."

She grasped his arm.

"But he will recover—he will recover!" she repeated, hurriedly.

The constable, who had been feed, and had not a bad heart at bottom, felt an interest in this woman, whom he believed innocent.

"That's what the doctors say," he put in, "if he don't dash his brains out himself against the wall, or if no one don't put an end to him, he'll calm down afore he dies."

"He will die, then, they think?" said Ralph.

"Yes; there's no chance of his living. He's like a skeleton now—he's awful to see. Excuse me, sir, but time's up."

Ralph embraced his mother, and promising to come on the next day, left with the constable.

In the hall he stopped.

"Can I see this madman?" he said.

The constable stared at him.

"See him, sir; no one durstn't go near him. You can just catch a glimpse at him through the bars of his cell-wicket."

"Oh, I'm not afraid of him!" said Ralph. "Obtain me permission, and I will go into his cell without fear."

The man glanced at the stalwart figure of the young heir of the Castletons, and no longer doubted his courage.

"I'll go," he said, "at once. I should like to see the man who'd go into his cell without a whip."

In a few minutes he returned, and upon receiving an additional half-crown from Ralph, he volunteered to conduct him to the room where the mad prisoner was confined.

"They took him to the infirmary first," said the man as they ascended the stairs: "took him there with the old sexton what was so badly burned in the cottage. But he kicked up such a shine there that he frightened all the people in the place, and so they had to bring him here."

The howling began afresh as they neared the room and when they reached the door they saw through the

little grating the outline of a fierce, ravenous, terrible face, gaunt as with hunger and despair.

But at the sight of Ralph Conyers the madman retreated with a howl.

"Open the door," said Ralph, "and let me enter."

The constable was not one whom it was fair to dominate a coward; but his hand trembled and his heart beat more quickly as he put the key in the lock.

The door once unlocked, he stood on one side, and pushing it open, Ralph went in.

The constable peeped through the grating.

A strange spectacle presented itself.

No sooner had the young man entered than the maniac crouched down on the floor in a corner and covered his face with his hands, moaning piteously.

"Go away," he said, "go away; what do you want with me. Ralph Conyers is dead."

Ralph glanced round the room.

It was thickly padded.

"He is safe at present from suicide," he said to himself.

Then he added aloud:

"Laura is not dead!"

Shadow looked at him with a scared, wild look.

"Who is Laura?" he asked; "not Florence—not my Florence?"

The constable was still looking through the grating.

"You see, his mind quite wanders," he said; "you can't get anything out of him."

"I fear it is so, indeed," returned Ralph, "but I still have hopes of him. He understands in his vague way some of what I tell him. It is of no use my asking more now. I will come out."

The madman understood this.

"Stay!" he cried. "Did you see the fire?"

"No; I was in London."

"You should have seen it. It was grand—it was splendid—it lit up the heavens, and more than that," he added, "it makes me safe."

"Safe!—safe from whom?"

"Safe of my revenge."

For a moment his thoughts appeared to be flowing in a connected channel.

Ralph endeavoured to follow it up.

"And upon whom do you want to have your revenge?" he asked.

The madman glanced at him with a cunning leer.

"I won't answer any questions," he said. "Don't you see I'm mad?"

Then, with a chuckling laugh, he crouched still further into his corner, and looked down steadily upon the ground, as if to repel all further advances.

Ralph quitted the room, spoke little to the constable, and hurrying to the station, awaited the first train to Burnley Bridge.

He had just time to say a few words to the guard when the train came up, and, entering it, he soon found himself at his destination.

The appearance of Burnley Bridge had greatly changed.

The spring was now advancing, and with the disappearance of the frosts had disappeared also the "Theatre Royal," and the host of itinerant players who thronged round it.

The green was quite deserted.

The only evidences of the scene of gaiety which had roused the people of Burnley Bridge into something like life at Christmas-time, were here and there fragments of wood, torn pieces of canvas, bits of rope and wisps of straw, scattered over the green and the road.

Burnett Crowe and his daughter had taken up their residence for the season at the Prince of Wales's Inn. They had, it will be remembered, intended originally to join Muddeby's company, and to travel with it for a time round the country.

Now, however, their prospects had changed.

The money which Mangles Worsop had accused the old schoolmaster of stealing from him had been repaid to him by Ralph Conyers.

There was now, therefore, no further necessity for concealment, as it was unlikely that Foscarri would hear of their residence in that quiet country town, or that even if he did he would take any measures against Cicely.

The return of Ralph Conyers was welcomed joyfully both by the old schoolmaster and his daughter. By the latter more especially.

His absence had told her heart a secret which, had he been present, would perhaps have long remained undiscovered.

She had never loved before, and it was with a kind of surprise that she felt the new feeling creeping into her breast.

She felt lonely in his absence—listened eagerly when his name was mentioned, and experienced an impatience for his return which she had never experienced before, even when her father was absent.

When at last he did return, the whole current of her emotions changed.

She had imagined that she would be able to rush forward and greet him joyfully, and express her delight at seeing him again.

But it was not so.

No sooner did he enter the room than a warm glow seemed to diffuse itself over her whole being—her heart fluttered—blushes suffused her cheeks, and for a moment she was unable to speak.

Ralph Conyers was so agitated by the events of the day that he did not notice the young girl's emotion, neither did he observe the tremulous voice in which she at length said:

"I am glad you have returned, Mr. Conyers, for you may be able to save your mother from much trouble and persecution."

"I have but just left her," returned Ralph; and he then proceeded to relate the interview with Laura Conyers in the prison, and his subsequent meeting with John Shadow.

It was about seven o'clock, when Cicely Crowe was left alone in the sitting-room, her father and Ralph Conyers having gone out for the purpose of making inquiries at the Burnley station.

The day had been an oppressive one, and the window was open.

At a quarter-past seven the train from Thornton arrived.

Feeling lonely, Cicely approached the casement, and leaning out, watched the passengers as they came along the road.

Upon this occasion there were but four—a gentleman and his servant, an artisan, and a lady dressed in dark clothes, who seemed anxious to avoid observation.

She slunk along the road, hastily, creeping close up to the hedgerows, and looking steadily ahead.

It seemed a kind of fatality, therefore, that made her turn round as she passed the inn, and glance up at the window where Cicely Crowe was gazing out upon the night.

That one false move betrayed her.

Cicely saw the white face in the bright gleam of the lamp, and recognized it at once.

It was that of Lady Isabel.

What followed was but the work of a moment.

Cicely was convinced that it could be for no good purpose that this woman was hurrying along the dark road alone, and in disguise. If she had waited until Ralph and her father returned, or had gone in search of them, she would, undoubtedly, have lost the opportunity. Without an instant's hesitation, therefore, she hurried on her cloak and bonnet, and passing quickly out of the inn, followed Lady Isabel along the highway.

CHAPTER LIII

He was a man of crime; but hear my story,
And tell me then if thou wert not the one
More blamable than he? *Redwin.*

It stood on the edge of the road about half a mile from Burnley Bridge.

It was a small tumble-down sort of cottage, so concealed behind closely planted elms that, as you approached it from the town, you would have observed no trace of a human habitation behind the trees unless a light was burning in one of the windows.

You could tell that the inmate of this solitary dwelling-place was an eccentric person, immediately you approached the spot.

The wooden gateway, which led into the tangled wilderness that passed for a garden, was carved grotesquely; and from the tops of the door-posts glared down the heads of wild animals, which would have been extremely terrible, had they been like anything in the whole range of nature.

The grass-grown pathway wound round amid the deserted beds quite an unnecessary distance, before it reached the inner-gate, which was about the only thing in the whole cottage which seemed not to be falling to pieces.

One window, it is true, was distinguishable among the cracked and dirty casements, by its having a heavy curtain drawn across it, and some article of furniture appearing just above the sill.

It seemed, indeed, as if the occupant, or occupants, as it might be, had emptied all but this one chamber.

It was towards this spot that Lady Isabel directed her steps on the night when Cicely Crowe followed her from Burnley Bridge. The house was enveloped in complete darkness, not a light appeared at any of the windows, and for a moment she doubted whether, after all, her visit would not be in vain.

She had come too far now, however, to recede without at least making a trial, and approaching the gate, therefore, she rang loudly.

The bell gave out a dull, hollow sound, which reverberated dimly in the night-air.

Then from behind the house came the deep baying of a dog, which showed that even that wretched tenement was not without its defender; yet no one answered the summons.

A light glimmered in an upper window, and that was all.

Determined not to be baffled, Lady Isabel pushed the door violently. It yielded at length, and groping her way as best she could along the grass-grown path, she reached, with some difficulty, the gate of the house, at which she knocked loudly.

The occupant of the cottage, perceiving that her night visitor was evidently not to be put off, came grumbling along the passage and opened the door with a growl.

"Who is it?" she asked, in an angry voice. "It is I," said Lady Isabel. "Have your eyes become so weak that you cannot recognise your benefactress?"

With these words she passed quickly into the hall. The old woman laughed sincerely as she closed the door.

"Benefactress!" she cried. "Wait awhile and I'll tell you what sort of benefactress you have been."

She led the way into a parlour, which, though dingy and ill-furnished, had a kind of rude comfort about it.

"Yes," continued the woman, as Lady Isabel sat down, "if you will listen, I'll tell you the series of benefits which have accrued to me since my first acquaintance with your name."

Lady Isabel eyed the speaker sternly. She was a woman of some seventy years; but time, which had whitened her locks, and furrowed her brow, and dried her skin like parchment, had not impaired the vigour of her form, which was almost masculine in its strength and contour.

"I did not come here," said Lady Isabel, "to listen to your stories, but to bring you work to do. If you act as I wish you your fortune is made."

The woman laughed bitterly.

"I am a young woman, indeed, to think of making my fortune," she said. "But come, you had better hear me out. I shan't feel comfortable till I have told you."

"Well, well," returned Lady Isabel, "tell me; but be as brief as possible, for it is not safe for me to be absent from home too long."

So Margery Deathson spoke as follows: "When my husband died, some eight years ago, he left me greatly in debt. I had but little to depend upon, as you are aware, for my son was always a wild, reckless fellow, from whom I could expect nothing. I had not seen him for years, but I had heard of him often—heard of fearful crimes and daring escapes, and each time that his name was mentioned to me, it caused a thrill of terror to run through my whole being."

"At length one evening he came home. 'The fog lay heavy on the marshes yonder, and I was sitting at my window looking out upon the dreary weather, when I heard the grating of a man's boot along the gravelly path, and a noise as of the clanking of a chain.'

"Then a face appeared at the window, haggard, pale, ghastly."

"It was my son's."

"I rushed to the door and admitted him. He came in, walking heavily as if in pain, and sank down exhausted in the first chair."

"I had observed that his feet left a track of blood along the passage, and now, as he sat there, I saw that his leg was bleeding, and that round that leg was a chain."

"Between us we managed to get it off, and then, when I had dressed his wound and given him some supper, he told me that he had escaped from the prison over the moors yonder. From the police I had nothing to fear, for they never knew that Gilbert Redbury, the convict, was the son of old Margery Deathson."

"A far more formidable enemy presented himself in the form of one of Gilbert's companions, who had also escaped, and hearing where he was, and that I had a little money, resolved to live upon our fears."

"I had double reason for alarm. In the first place, I feared the discovery of my son, and I was well aware how I should be compromised if he were found at my house. So for a time I gave him all he asked."

"At length, however, I could give no more; I had already deprived myself of almost the necessities of life to supply him with money, and it had now come to this, that we must either starve or allow this man to denounce Gilbert to the authorities."

"We were sitting one evening in this room with the shutters closed and barred, and the door locked."

"I wonder," said I, "if Jim Forrest will be here to-night?"

"My son looked up at me with a scowl which made me tremble."

"I tell you what it is, mother," he said, "if that man comes here again it will be the worse for him."

"The words were scarcely out of his mouth when a loud knock came to the door."

"That is his knock," I said, trembling, for I felt that something awful was about to happen.

"I rose to answer the knock, but he held me back, saying that he would go himself.

"I begged him to stop where he was, but he pushed me aside, and went out in spite of me.

"I heard him undoing the bolts of the door, and then demanding in an angry voice, what it was that the intruder wanted."

"Then all was still. After waiting for some moments I was unable to bear the suspense any longer, and creeping to the door, I opened it and listened. There was not a sound—evidently no one was there.

"I went out into the passage; the front door was open and I could see in the moonlight that my son and the stranger, whoever he was, had disappeared. I listened eagerly to try and catch the sound of their voices out in the road.

"After a while, finding that I could discover nothing, I went in leaving the door slightly ajar.

"I had been sitting by this fire about half-an-hour, when I heard footsteps in the garden, and presently my son entered staggering like a drunken man, his hands and his clothes were covered with blood, and his eyes glared terribly.

"What have you done, Gilbert?" I asked.

"I have killed him," he said, "and thrown his body into the river."

"Then he told me how he had met him at the door, and before he could speak a word, had stabbed him again and again, and throwing his body upon his shoulder, carried him away until they reached the river side, when he threw it into the water. He had not waited to see whether it floated, for he fancied he heard a noise this time, and was afraid of being discovered.

"Although he was my own son, I felt afraid of him after this, and was glad when he at length departed.

"Since then I have heard nothing of him, until a few days ago, when I learned that he was at Medborough, which you know is about ten miles distant.

"And what has all this to do with me?" cried Lady Isabel.

The woman eyed her fiercely.

"Did you not induce my son," she cried, "to assist John Shadow in carrying off young Ralph Conyers? Did you not lead him into the commission of his first crime? Have you not embittered my whole life? Did you not by heavy bribes persuade my husband to make up deadly drugs for you, which you could have used for no other purposes than those of murder? Have you not cast a gloom over my home which nothing can ever relieve me of?"

"It is growing late," said Lady Isabel, petulantly, "and I cannot stay here longer to listen to your stories. I have much myself to tell you in order to explain the service I require of you. Tell me at once, are you willing to assist me again?"

"Yes, yes!" replied the woman, "my poverty will not allow me to be independent. Speak, and explain yourself."

CHAPTER LIV.

My summer of life—it is gone:

No balm my disease can reprove;
Old friends that once came in a throng
Are fled with their smiles and their love.

One memory only is left—

That memory most bitter to me—
Vengeance is all that I live for now,
And speedily that vengeance must be.

M. Dunne.

It was not long before Lady Isabel had explained the exact state of affairs at Milton Hall.

"You understand," she said in conclusion, "that this Madame Delaume did really poison my husband."

The woman smiled grimly.

"I understand," she said, "that you wish me to believe so."

To this taunt, Lady Isabel did not reply.

She proceeded with her explanation.

"If this woman returns to my house, she will be my ruin. As she is guilty, I wish that she may be punished; but the evidence is so slight against her, that I fear she will escape, if I do not strengthen it."

"How can I assist you?" asked Mrs. Deathson.

"Most effectually," returned Lady Isabel, "there is now in her private drawer at the hall, a book entitled, 'History of Undiscovered Poisons.' I wish you to come forward at the trial and swear that this book was purchased by Madame Delaume of your husband, and that she afterwards bought of him mixtures made up according to the receipts in that book?"

The woman did not answer.

Lady Isabel proceeded:

"I will see that you are held harmless throughout the inquiry. I shall make your safety a necessary prelude to your appearance."

The woman smiled.

"You have made your arrangements well, no doubt," she said. "But how could I prove my words? Who will believe that my husband told me the secrets of his profession?"

"That is easily provided against," said Lady Isabel. "You will, of course, remember that behind your husband's surgery was a little room, where everything that passed in the former apartment could be overheard. I am aware that you availed yourself of this on several occasions when I was there, and it would be no stretch of the imagination to say that you did the same on the occasion of the visit of Madame Delaume."

The woman appeared in no way delighted at the proposal, the carrying out of which was to bring her a renewal of fortune.

She did not answer for some moments; but at last, in a kind of jerking way:

"Well, and if I do your bidding, what am I to receive?"

"Name your own price."

"Two thousand pounds."

"They shall be yours."

"And when am I to receive them?"

"The day after the trial."

"Whether the woman be convicted or not?"

"Yes."

"And what is my security?"

"My word."

The woman laughed aloud.

"Doubtful security," she said.

Lady Isabel frowned.

"You can have no other," she said, sternly. "Do you suppose I would put my name to such a thing in writing?"

"No—no, that would be unreasonable! Well, I will do it. Give me fifty pounds in advance. I am poor, and want it."

"I have but twenty with me—they are yours."

She rose to depart.

"Keep yourself in readiness," she added. "I will give you due notice of the time when you will be required."

Margery Deathson rose also, and led the way to the door, from which Lady Isabel walked rapidly away.

Before Margery had time to close the gate, a light, girlish figure started up from among the shadows of the wall, and spoke to her.

"Stay, Mrs. Deathson!" she cried, "I, too, have something to say."

The old woman started back in alarm.

"Who are you, and what do you want?"

"Let me enter," said Cicely Crowe, for it was she; "it is cold here, and I have much to say."

Silently old Margery led her into the front parlour.

"I have heard your conversation with the woman who has just left you!" said Cicely. "If you do not like evil for evil's sake, you will be glad of an opportunity to be released from the promise you have made to her. I have come to release you!"

A smile of pleasure passed over Margery's face.

"You are right!" she said. "I should be glad of such a release. But I am poor, and money is to me a necessity!"

"You shall have money!" said Cicely; "to-morrow it shall be brought to you!"

Margery Deathson gazed at her young visitor for a few moments musingly.

"And what interest, pray, have you in this affair?"

The question took her somewhat by surprise.

"What interest indeed had she?"

Why had she been crouching for hours in the cold, under the shadow of the dilapidated house?

What right had she to dog the footsteps of Lady Isabel Conyers?

"I am a friend of Mr. Ralph Conyers," he said, blushing, she knew not why. I saw Lady Isabel pass the inn, where I and my father are staying and knowing that she would not go out at night and in disguise, except for a bad purpose, I followed her. My father and Mr. Conyers had gone to the station, or they would have come instead of me. Lady Isabel has told you a story which is entirely false."

"In what respect?"

"She has represented that the evidence is strong against Madame Delaume—so strong, that it only requires your testimony to confirm it."

"And is not so?"

"No. The evidence against her must fail; it is so contradictory, so full of flaws and errors, that no one will believe it. Besides, it will come out upon the trial why Lady Isabel is so anxious for the condemnation of the governess. This governess is the mother of Ralph Conyers, the true Marchioness of Castleton."

A gleam of intelligence passed over Margery's face, but she did not seem taken by surprise. She had long suspected that there was some secret which Lady

Isabel kept even from her—that there was some spectre eternally haunting her mind.

"I begin to understand you now," she exclaimed. "She has her son working with her, and it is from him I am to receive the money. This is an opportunity I have long wished for. It is to Lady Isabel that I owe all my misfortune; it was she, as I have said, who first led my son into crime; and it is through his crimes that I have been dragged down, year by year, until I am in the wretched poverty you see me in. From the time when he went with John Shadow to Milton Hall, to carry off Ralph Conyers, he has been a continual burden upon us. My husband supplied him with money to such an extent that he fell deeply in debt; and when he died, left me, as I told Lady Isabel, in great poverty and trouble. I have now my chance of being revenged, and you may depend that I shall be an earnest supporter of your cause."

"Do not allow Lady Isabel to know of my visit, or of your change in sentiments," said Cicely, "otherwise she may adopt some means of thwarting our plans. To-morrow Mr. Conyers will be here to see you. But before I go, let me ask you one question. Did Lady Isabel obtain that book which she mentioned of your husband?"

"No; my husband never possessed a book of the kind. She must have obtained it from John Shadow."

Just as she spoke there was a rustling amid the branches without, and then a tramping of feet.

Then the door was forcibly pushed open, and a strong wind rushed into the passage, moaning up the narrow staircase, and shaking the whole cottage as if it were endeavouring to bear off the roof.

A storm had been brewing for hours.

The trees along the road, which early in the evening had stood motionless in the midst of a death-like silence, were now rocked to and fro by a gusty wind—the fitful, stormy blast which is the terror of men at sea.

The women listened in terror.

The situation of the cottage was so lonely, and the night so inclement and uninviting, that it was unlikely any one would be wandering about the spot except with some evil design.

Was it a robber?

Was it one who had come thither for some more deadly purpose than that of theft?

Or had Lady Isabel perceived the entrance of Cicely Crowe and returned to listen to her words?

Thoughts such as these passed like lightning-flashes through the minds of the two women, as they sat gazing at each other in silent terror, and straining every nerve, as it were, to listen.

The footsteps which had been heard outside the window had passed away and were lost, but then, might they not return?

And it was the fear of what they might hear or see that chained the listeners to their seats, and prevented either of them from rising and closing the door, which the fierce wind had thrown open.

In the intensity of the silence which followed the fitful passion of the blast, the slightest sound acquired a distinctness which seemed awful.

The ticking of the old clock in the corner was twice as loud as before—the very fall of the ashes in the grate startled and alarmed them.

The old furniture in the room appeared to cast forth weird-like shadows; and at this moment it would not have surprised them if the door had opened of itself, and some one had entered without a sound to announce his coming.

And in the midst of this exaggeration of fear the footsteps were heard returning.

They approached rapidly, entered the house and strode along the passage.

Then the door was flung open, and a man entered.

A tall, dark man whose stout frame seemed shaken by fatigue or privation.

A man without a hat, with short light hair, and hands torn and bleeding.

A man dressed in a suit of grey, the monotony of which was only broken by patches where he had torn it in scrambling over hedges or sharp palings, or where the blood had dropped from wounds in his face.

A man whose eyes glared at you with an uncertain kind of defiance, as if he were casting back in your teeth beforehand, the words which would have expressed the bad opinion you were compelled to form of him.

Cicely had never seen him before, yet she knew him at once.

She could fancy him as he had come home on that dark night, bleeding and hungry, with the iron ring round his ankle, and the chain clanking as he walked.

She could see him also as he staggered in on that other night, telling his mother that he had killed his foe and cast his body into the river.

The man who stood before her was the convict, Gilbert Deathson.

(To be continued.)

THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF SUCCESS.—As an illustration of the attraction a great success is for the public, the following anecdote is given with all the necessary proofs of veracity:—A gentleman went on Monday to the office of the Opéra Comique, and asked if he could have a box for February. "Certainly, monsieur." "Could I have it earlier?" "Certainly, monsieur." "When?" "To-night, or any night you like." "Oh, if that's the case," said monsieur, turning away disgusted, "I don't want a box at all;" proving the adage that the many attract the many.

THE CEDARS.

"BEAUTIFUL! beautiful! Percy Vivian is a lucky fellow!"

The admiring eyes of the two young men, conversing together in the perfumed ballroom of the stately Mrs. Doshelmer, rested on the fair face of Maude Elmpark, as she swept slowly down the lighted piazza, leaning on the arm of her lover, Percy Vivian.

They were a well-matched pair; Vivian, with his dark, handsome face, and Maude, pale and coldly brilliant as a moonlit twilight.

They had been but three weeks affianced, though they had known each other for years. In childhood they were playmates, in first youth friends; and when Mr. Vivian returned from a long tour in the East, to find his early playmate grown into a lovely girl of twenty, he knew by the unwonted tenderness he felt for all that pertained to her, that he had held her memory always dearer than anything else in life.

And after a little time, he won her confession that she had loved him all the while—that she asked no greater happiness than to be his wife.

It was no matter of wonder that Vivian loved Maude. All men who enjoyed the rare blessing of her acquaintance were ready to give her their hearts; but there was a sort of cold, intangible frost-work continually surrounding her, that repelled all advances, and kept her safe from unwelcome suitors, like an impenetrable atmosphere. Yet she was not cold-natured, only indifferent. The best and warmest emotions of her nature were untouched, until Vivian's love unlocked the secret fountains, and gave them leave to flush her cheeks with crimson, and light up her amber-grey eyes with the fire of an unquenchable devotion.

Maude Elmpark? Description will fall far short of doing her justice. A face like hers must be seen to be appreciated. She was tall and slender, with a willowy grace of motion peculiarly her own—not strained, but natural. Her complexion was clear and colourless as the leaves of the water-lily; her eyes of that indescribable colour between brown and grey, with shifting lights and shadows, like the flash of an opal. Her hair, half-gold, half-chestnut, was, perhaps, her most perfect charm; a fine singer, and no indifferent musician.

Her parents were moderately wealthy, and resided a little out of the great city, at a fine old place called the Cedars. Maude herself was an heiress, provided, always, that she married with the consent of her mother.

Mrs. Elmpark had once had a brother—an eccentric, erratic sort of a being, who early in life had gone to the East Indies, and amassed a large fortune. Afterwards he had travelled over the greater part of the civilized world, and died at last in Patagonia.

Previously, however, he had visited the Cedars, seen and loved Maude, his young niece, and made a will bequeathing to her all his property, without reserve, upon the condition that she should marry with her mother's consent. Otherwise the whole estate was to revert to Paul and Henry Elmpark, jointly, the two sons of Maude's mother by a former marriage with the brother of her present husband.

Perhaps it is necessary to give these two young men a little more than this brief notice.

Paul was a fierce-tempered, wild young fellow, impatient of restraint, like all the male Elmparks before him; and for four years nothing had been heard from him by his family. He had run away from home at the age of twenty, and it was supposed he had gone to sea. His mother had long believed him dead, and there was no reason for anyone to think otherwise.

Henry, Paul's brother, was an imbecile—feeble in mind and body—a very child, to all appearance; kind, gentle, and inoffensive; but without a single attribute of ordinary intelligence.

People said it was only just that the Elmparks should have no male heir to keep up the ancient grandeur of the family. It was said of old that the sins of the fathers should be visited upon the children, even unto the third and fourth generation; and in this case the prophecy was being fulfilled.

There was a romantic story of wrong and darkness told of George Elmpark, the grandfather of the present

incumbent of the Cedars. It may as well be given here as elsewhere—since it is necessary to a complete elucidation of our story.

While yet a young man, George Elmpark had gone West with a party of tourists, to explore the wonders of the then almost unbroken tract of country lying west of the Mississippi, at the north. He had always been of a wild, reckless disposition, and it is not likely that this episode of savage, unrestrained life tended to improve him. While there he met and wronged a young Indian princess, the daughter of a powerful chief—and then deserting, he returned to his home, and shortly afterward married a lady of beauty and fortune, to whom he had been some time betrothed, and who loved him devotedly, in spite of his faults.

Enola, the princess—followed her seducer to his home, and in the presence of his wife and child, she cursed him as only an Indian can. She said that all the males of the house of Elmpark should disgrace the hangty line—and all the daughters should die violent deaths. She told Elmpark, that for his treachery to her, all the generations that sprang from his blood should be accursed; that his proud family name should perish from the page of history.

She was driven from the house with oaths and maledictions, and was seen no more.

But the curse worked. Of the five children which called Elmpark father, two were girls; three, boys. The eldest son committed a crime for which he ended his days in prison. The second was a gambler, and perished in a drunken brawl by the hand of a man whom he had defrauded. The third led a reckless life in his youth, but sobered down as he approached middle life—married an estimable woman, and lived happy.

The girls were beautiful, gentle-hearted creatures—like their unhappy mother; but the curse of the savage princess extended to them, also. One was thrown from a carriage, and instantly killed; and the other was drowned, on the day after her marriage, by the capsizing of a sail-boat containing the bridal party.

Maude's father was the last child of George Elmpark's son. Her mother's first husband—the father of Paul and Henry—had died by an over-indulgence of his passion for wine. Her Aunt Maude, after whom she was named—had been accidentally shot, in her childhood, by a sportsman, one of her brother's comrades.

So it was no wonder that superstitious people looked on beautiful Maude Elmpark with admiration and doubt. It might be her turn next, they said—who could tell?

Maude, herself, had hardly given the subject a thought. She used to laugh when they spoke to her about it; and yet, sometimes, for an instant, a shadowy dread flitted chillily over her, to be gone again before she could grasp and analyse the sensation.

Percy Vivian would brook no putting afar off the day of his happiness. He had gained Maude's promise to be his, early in November—and he would consent to wait no longer than Christmas. And so the bridal was fixed for that day.

Time flies swiftly to those who love, and wait for a near bliss, and it seemed hardly a week before the day preceding the 25th of December arrived. The preparations were all completed; the bridesmaids, gay and beautiful, were all at the Cedars; the *trousseau* was superb; the bridal feast lavishly abundant, even the weather was propitious; and the night came on clear, cold, and glittering with stars.

Percy remained with his fair betrothed until after ten; indeed, he might have entirely forgotten that time was divided into hours, had not the merry bridesmaids reminded him that it was contrary to all etiquette, to keep the bride from the sleep she needed to make her fresh for the morrow. He need not be selfish now, they said; after to-night he was to have a whole lifetime to cultivate that attribute.

He rose to go. Maude followed him to the piazza. He drew her silently to his heart, and they stood there looking out upon the serene night. She shivered and drew closer to his side.

"Is my darling cold? I am thoughtless to keep you in this air, Maude; let me kiss you and then go in; to-morrow night we will have no parting."

"No, Percy, not cold, only foreboding. What if—"

She stopped abruptly, and he saw that her face was ghastly pale in the bright starlight.

"What? Maude, you are not, it cannot be possible that you are allowing that wretched old superstition to trouble you?"

"I hardly gave it a thought, Percy, until your love made life so dear to me. Before I knew this sweetness, it would not have been so hard for me to have gone like the others—"

"Not another word! Only a few brief hours of sleep and pleasant dreams lie between this and the time that shall make you mine. You are agitated and nervous—be my own calm, beautiful Maude once more, and I will say good-night."

"Oh, Percy, if I should never see you again!" "Hush, darling! your words are a sharp pain. If you persist in this melancholy mood, I shall return and not leave you to-night, if I do keep you up to have dull eyes and pale cheeks on your wedding-day! Shall I?"

She controlled herself with an effort, and answered him with a calmness she did not feel:

"Forgot my folly, Percy; I am doubting, because I love you so! It hardly seems possible that such perfect happiness could last."

"We will make it sure, after to-night, dearest," he finished the sentence in a fond whisper that brought the crimson to her cheeks in great waves, and moistened her eyes with happy tears.

He led her to the door of the parlour, held her a moment in his arms, touched his lips to hers, released her, and went down the walk to the gate. She did not look after him as was her wont, but bidding her young friends good-night, and declining their assistance about disrobing, she went up to her chamber.

Christmas morning dawned fair and bright. The air was cold and crisp; the hard-frodden snow glittered like crystals in the rays of the rising sun.

Kate Stuart, the gayest and handsomest of the four bridesmaids, was the first to rise; and thr-ving on her wrapper, she stole softly to Maude's chamber, to surprise her with the greeting of "Merry Christmas." She tapped at the door, there was no answer; she repeated the summons, but all was quiet within. She turned the knob—the door swung slowly open.

Merry words were on the lips of the happy Kate; but what she saw, froze them there unuttered! She did not step over the threshold, she stood fastened to the spot, powerless to move; but the wild cry she uttered drew the entire household to the fatal chamber.

They went in with horror-stricken faces, and turned away from the ghastly spectacle that met their eyes, pale as death itself.

Nearly in the centre of the apartment, in a pool of her own blood, lay Maude Elmpark, stone dead! A wound in the left side, showed where the steel of the midnight assassin had penetrated her heart!

She was still in her evening dress—apparently no article of value was missing from her person; her white fingers glittered with jewels, her beautiful hair was confined with diamond pins, and the same precious stones clasped the costly lace upon her bosom.

The face was calm and undisturbed. But for its deadly pallor, you might have thought her sleeping. There was no evidence of a struggle visible anywhere about the chamber, all was as it had been; but on the window-sill there was a dark stain of blood, and the spotless window-drapery bore the marks of ensanguined fingers.

Percy Vivian had in some way heard the horrible tidings, and appeared on the scene before a single sound had been exchanged by the stricken household. They parted before him, as pale and haggard, he sprang forward and lifted the cold form to his bosom—kissing the mute lips that would never again thrill at his touch—and murmuring in her ears the old words of love and tenderness.

She was deaf now, she would never again care for his love, or lift her sealed eyelids to show him the sweet, shy joy in his presence, hidden beneath that impenetrable veil for ever.

Slowly, as it seemed, the terrible, benumbing reality broke over him. He laid her down again, and rose to his feet. Every vestige of emotion had gone from his face. It was cold and impassive as a rock. He lifted his right hand solemnly toward Heaven—the hand wet and clammy with her blood.

"Bear me witness," he said, in a voice so changed that those who knew him hardly recognized the harsh tone—"so long as I live, until that day when I shall fix my vengeance upon the murderer of that woman—will I give myself no rest; so long will I direct every energy, and strain every faculty of my soul, to avenge her death. No tie so dear that it shall interfere with this single purpose of my life—no creed, or law, or power, shall be strong enough to prevent me from consummating that revenge when the hour comes—as it surely will!"

He stooped down and severed a lock of her hair—turned and left the room. He never looked upon her face again.

There was an inquest, but nothing was evoked by it, save the fact that out of all the valuable articles with which the deceased was surrounded at the time of her death, nothing was missing save a garnet ring, which she wore always, and which had been for years an heirloom in the Elmpark family.

The verdict of the inquest was, "Assassination by some person or persons unknown to the jury," and the body of Maude Elmpark was laid with its kindred dust.

Percy Vivian kept his vow. Every purpose of his life was made subservient to its one ruling motive—

the discovery of Maude's murderer. Day and night he planned and executed, but nothing came out of the dark chaos. No clue could be obtained; the whole affair was wrapped in impenetrable mystery.

Great rewards were offered, renowned detectives put upon the search; everything that money could do was done, but to no end; Maude's death was still unavenged.

Percy grew thin and old before his time. Grey hairs clustered around his temples, and he not yet thirty years of age. This constant wear of anxiety, this interminable suspense, left their marks in unmistakable distinctness. You had only to look at his stern, introverted face, to know that the man lived with an iron desperation of purposes in his soul.

About two years after Maude's death, Paul Elmpark suddenly returned to the Cedars. He came upon his family like one from the dead. The account he gave of himself was what might have been expected from one of his character. He had been sailor, soldier, contractor, and afterwards confidential companion of a nobleman of wealth and position.

Becoming weary of this roving life, which was old enough to be monotonous, he had abruptly resolved to return home, if only to see what changes had taken place during his absence; and then, for the first time, the tidings of his sister's death reached him.

Of course he took possession of his uncle's bequest at once, and carried things with a high hand. Henry was too imbecile to give him any difficulty, and shortly after his brother's return, the poor fellow pined away, and died in his bed one night, and went entirely out of all remembrance.

Paul had undisputed sway. His life had taught him how to spend money to advantage. He purchased a beautiful site, a few miles from the Cedars, and erected a house which was the envy and admiration of the whole neighbourhood.

There he lived, with his dogs and horses, and servants, a jovial, bachelor life, gathering about him gay companions who cared nothing for him, but adored the red wine that flowed so freely over the festal board.

Friends, Paul Elmpark had none. Indeed, it was extremely doubtful if he desired any. By nature hard, cold, saturnine, and ungenial—it was a little singular why he kept his house constantly open to company, and seemed never content unless his grand halls were echoing with song, and music, and laughter.

It would have been more natural for him to have shut himself up in solitude, and let the world make its own feasts and drink its own wine. But people said prosperity had changed the man's disposition.

Percy Vivian, meanwhile, was steadily pursuing the phantom of his revenge. The slightest shadow of a clue was sufficient to send him off miles and miles to trace it to the end, which was always a dreary myth; and he would return home gloomy and sad—but never discouraged.

Some faint suspicion pointed him to the distant town of Harwood, three hundred miles away, and thither he proceeded. There, as elsewhere, he had been deceived, and riding back from his investigation, in a sullen, reckless mood, on a baulky horse, he was thrown and badly injured.

A couple of farmers witnessing the accident, took him into the nearest house; and here, for weary weeks, he lay on a bed of languishing pain. Doubtless he owed his life mainly to the devoted nursing of Agnes Earle.

Totally unlike Maude Elmpark, this girl yet reminded Mr. Vivian of that lost one. There was a certain nameless grace of manner, a yielding sweetness in the tones of her voice, that spoke to him of her.

Lying there helpless, weak, entirely depending on Agnes for every comfort of his life, it is not surprising that he learned to love her. First, he noticed how dreary it was when she was away; and afterwards, he thought her entrance into his meagre room brought sunshine and glory.

Agnes Earle was not beautiful, but her face had something about it better than mere symmetry of outline. Her hair and eyes were brown; and the soft bright curls fell over cheeks flushed with health, and shoulders of alabaster purity. Her smile was sweetness itself, her voice low and musical.

She had very little history evidently. An orphan without resources, she had always managed to support herself; doing cheerfully whatever her hands found to do. Her life had been a hard one, for a woman who longs for the ease and perfect rest that the protection of home and love brings her; but it had not made her sad; it had only taught her a more implicit trust and faith in the final goodness of God.

And Percy Vivian had loved her. Not as he had loved Maude, calmly, serenely, devotedly; but passionately, almost fiercely. What should have been his first love, from his impetuosity, came to him at last.

This new love closely resembled the old in one particular. As he was impatient before, so was he impatient now. Life had cheated his best years of

happiness; and now that he again looked into the future with hope and joy, he could ill afford to wait long.

He told his love to Agnes, one day while they were sitting together in the fading light of a summer sunset. It matters not how he told it or what she said, it was all sweet and beautiful to them. He was to meet with no disappointment. Agnes loved him.

He gave her no particulars of his past life. He did not think it necessary to sadden her with a minute recital of what he had suffered; he only told her that he had loved and lost.

She pitied him, she soothed him, she loved him. Life grew strangely fair and precious to him as he felt her soft lips on his forehead, and held her little trembling hands so closely in his own.

There were few preparations to make—no friends to consult.

They took a short bridal tour—at least, they intended it for a short one—but time passed so pleasantly that it was November before they reached Percy's paternal residence, which was situated fifteen or sixteen miles from the Cedars.

It was a grand old place, surrounded by tall trees, commanding a fine view, and shut in from the north winds by the long, blue line of hills. It had been in the family for generations, and each succeeding proprietor had done something to beautify and adorn, and Percy's exquisite taste had finished and perfected the whole.

The back of the house was crowned with a rustic tower, comprising a sort of observatory from whence, on clear days, by the aid of a glass, the distant ocean, dotted here and there with white sails, was distinctly visible.

Agnes was charmed with this retreat. On warm days, when the season seemed to have forgotten how nigh it was drawing to winter, and the sunshine fell mellowly on the withered leaves, she would sit there half the afternoon, toying with a book or her work, and gazing dreamily out on the exquisite prospect around her.

When not in the house, on his return home, Percy always found her there; and like young lovers they would sit together until after the moon came up in the east and the night-dews fell heavily on the grass.

They were very happy. So happy that for a time Percy put away from him the ever-absorbing thought of revenge. He would make amends, perhaps, by-and-bye, when the novelty of this new existence had somewhat worn off.

One day, Mr. Vivian and his wife were out riding. They met Paul Elmpark. Percy stopped to speak to him; and Agnes, glancing up carelessly to see who was the stranger, met the baleful glance of his eyes fastened upon her. She turned white, uttered a faint cry, and fell back insensible!

Elmpark's brow was dark with some suppressed emotion, and he bit his lip fiercely beneath his black moustache. But his voice was cool and even, as he asked:

"Is the lady your wife, Mr. Vivian?"

"Yes. I had forgotten you had not met her. I cannot imagine the cause of her sudden illness. She was well when we set out. I think I will drive to your farmhouse and get assistance."

He put his arm around her, and started the horse. She aroused, flung her arms wildly around his neck and laid her face against his; but to all his tender, anxious questions she returned the single answer—she had been seized with sudden dizziness. She was subject to such turns, sometimes.

But after that, her manner visibly changed. She was restless and nervous—started suddenly at the opening of a door, and shrank from strangers with a sort of feverish dread. She could hardly bear her husband out of her sight; and when he returned, even from a few hours' absence—she would cling to him with a touching sort of regretful tenderness, as though she feared the next moment might take him from her for ever.

Percy's love for her increased every day; he could not understand how he had ever thought himself happy before he had known her. He shuddered to think what life would be to him without her.

Christmas approached. It was the evening before that sacred anniversary. Agnes was in her own room, when her husband returned from neighbouring city—whither business had called him. She sprang up to welcome him—he was in his most genial mood. He had been thinking of what a Christmas night had lost for him—and remembering what this blessed Christmas would hold for him.

He stopped and kissed her, keeping his hands behind him:

"What will my Agnes give for the contents of this little box?" he said, teasingly, holding above his head a casket of pearl and ebony. She reached up her hands to secure the treasure, he caught them in one of

his, but something strangely familiar about those clinging fingers arrested the very life-current in his veins. He forced her hands down almost rudely, and brought one of them—the left—within the broad glare of the shaded lamp.

And as he gazed, every feature of his face changed into iron-like rigidity—the tenderness died out of his eyes, the smile fled from his lips, he was cold and hard as a rock!

For, glittering on the slender forefinger of his wife, he saw Maude Elmpark's garnet ring!

Their eyes met. Agnes turned first red, then white, and sank breathless into a chair. Each seemed waiting for the other to break the dead silence. His fierce, relentless, cruel gaze seemed to cut her like a sharp knife, for though she uttered no sound, the wild, despairing entreaty of her great brown eyes would have moved a heart of adamant. He spoke first:

"May I ask, Mrs. Vivian, where you obtained that ring?"

"Oh, Percy, Percy! do not look at me in that dreadful way!" she cried, clinging to his arm. He shook her off roughly.

"Answer my question, if you please. How came you by that ring?"

"Alas! alas! I cannot tell you! I dare not!"

"Do you know to whom that ring once belonged? Do you know whose finger it clasped while there was murder done? Did you know that Maude Elmpark, my affianced wife, wore it upon her finger the very night she was murdered?"

She fell back in her chair, shaking like a wind-blown reed.

"Maude Elmpark! your affianced wife! great Heavens!"

"Yes; she was my affianced wife, I loved her! And before I ever saw you, standing by her dead body, I swore a solemn oath, and called upon God to witness it—an oath of vengeance on her murderer! Do you hear?"

She was gazing at him intently, but it was doubtful if she saw whatever was before her. Her eyes were fixed and stony, and expressionless, like the eyes of the dead.

"The wretch who murdered her, took away only one valuable, this ring; all other things were left as they were; only this was missing. Late the night previous I had seen it upon her finger, and she never took it off, because she looked upon it as a talisman! And now, I ask you, in whose possession should that ring be, but in that of her murderer?"

"Good Heaven, Percy! it cannot be that you suspect me of—"

"Hush! I make no charge. I state only the facts, and you are left to draw your own inferences. Agnes, I have loved you dearly! By the fierce pain at my heart, I know that I love you still—will you, I ask you once more, explain to me how this ring came into your possession?"

"I cannot! I cannot! oh, God, help me!"

"Another question which perhaps you can answer. Where were you on the night of the 24th of December—three years ago?"

She sprang to her feet, her breath coming in furtive gasps, her whole nature shaken by an emotion too strong for her control.

"Answer me, Agnes!"

"I cannot! oh, if you ever loved me, do not ask me that dreadful question!"

The stern, granite features of the man were framed with lines of unalterable determination. His mouth grew hard and tense—every trace of softness had vanished from his countenance; whoever asked mercy of that stony heart could find none.

"At last," he said, slowly, "at last, and within my reach! I said no tie, however tender, should come between me and my vengeance! Amen! So let it be!"

She caught his hand, with frantic entreaty in every feature of her face.

"Oh, my husband! say that you do not suspect me of this dreadful crime! Heavens! what motive do you think I could have in murdering that beautiful woman, of whom I know nothing? What?"

He put her down in her chair, and tore her hands from clinging to his—went from the room, and turned the key upon her.

She sat where he had left her, motionless as a statue; but for the convulsive drawing-in of her labouring breath, she might have been mistaken for a corpse. The fire went out in the grate—the glowing coals changed to a heap of dull grey ashes—the lamp burned dim and smoky. Still she did not move.

At last, heavy steps sounded in the lower hall, there was a confused murmur of voices—some persons ascended the stairs, and directly the door of her room was thrown open, and her husband entered, followed by three men in the uniform of constables.

"There," cried Mr. Vivian, pointing to his wife, "there is your prisoner. Do your duty."

Those men were used to scenes of wretchedness,

but their hearts were more pitying than the heart of that man who a few hours before would have given his life to have saved Agnes from pain. They hesitated, spoke together in low voices, and with tearful eyes.

But they were paid to inflict misery, they must perform the duties of their office. The sheriff read aloud a warrant for the arrest of Agnes Vivian, charged with the murder, three years before, of Maude Elmpark, of the Cedars.

Not a muscle of Agnes's beautiful face moved; she sat there quiet, unresisting, resigned—her eyes lifted to Heaven, her hands clasped together, and the fatal garnet ring glittering palely in the dim light.

"Will you not give surety for this lady's appearance this morning at the office of Justice Smithson? And save the notoriety of going through the village with us at this early hour?" asked the sheriff.

"No," answered Vivian, calmly, "let the law take its course."

So they gently told Mrs. Vivian that she must go with them. She answered not a word, but rose and stood in readiness. The sheriff glanced at her unprotected head and shoulders, and himself wrapped a shawl around her, while her husband stood by, stolidly indifferent.

Not until she was going out of the hall-door did she turn back to address him who was thus sending her forth.

"Oh, Percy," she said, brokenly, "may God forgive you! You know not what you are doing!"

He closed the door upon her before the sentence was fairly ended, and going back to the room she had just left, he entered, locked the door, and flinging himself upon the carpet, where last her feet had rested, groaned in agony.

Mrs. Vivian was examined before a magistrate. Her husband was admitted to testify, and told his story briefly. It was nothing more, in effect, than the reader already knows.

The fact of the ring being in her possession was an overwhelming evidence against her to the minds of those who were to pronounce judgment on the case, and for want of some rebutting testimony, she was, in default of bail, removed to goal, to await her final trial in January.

One thing about the conduct of the accused was very singular. When asked what she had to say in her defence, she had replied that she desired to say nothing whatever; when asked if she were guilty or not guilty of the charge preferred against her, she had declined to plead. And even this circumstance told against her with the discriminating public.

The time for Mrs. Vivian's trial was drawing rapidly nigh. Meanwhile, Percy Vivian, keeping his vow constantly before him, worked indefatigably to get at the truth. It seemed as if the man's whole soul was absorbed in this blind scheme of vengeance.

It is always a terrible thing to be wholly devoted to one object, one pursuit, to the entire and total exclusion of everything else; but when that object is the ignoble one of vengeance, then it becomes doubly terrible.

But Mr. Vivian looked upon it as a sacred duty that he owed to the dead; he felt as if he could never again rest, either in this life or in that which is to come, until he had made all the atonement in his power for his dreadful, though unpremeditated sin, in making the murderer of Maude Elmpark his wife!

He would live, he said to himself, to see his revenge consummated; and then he had done with life. The day which saw Agnes executed for the murder of his first love, should not set in darkness and number him among the living.

He gave himself no rest nor sleep. The servants said their master was surely going mad, and those who looked upon his haggard face and wild eyes shrank back involuntarily to give him a wider path. No man who met the full gleam of his eye cared for a too close companionship.

Now that a clue was discovered upon which to hang suspicion, confirmatory proofs came thick and fast, it is singular how quickly scores of little circumstances, insignificant in themselves, but of awful moment when put together, came to light. It seemed as if the Fates had conspired together to doom Alice Vivian to a felon's death.

Under the influence of large promised rewards, witnesses came forth from places hitherto dreamed not of; sorrows never before known to exist, furnished their mite, and by the time the momentous Monday arrived, it was pretty generally believed that the accused woman must be convicted.

Even the stately-resolved heart of Percy Vivian shuddered within him, when he thought of what the end must inevitably be.

Well, the day came, clear, mild and beautiful, the day of the trial. A few minor cases were briefly disposed of, and then Agnes was brought to the court.

A murmur of admiration and sympathy ran around

the curious spectators, at the rare beauty of the youthful prisoner. She was dressed entirely in black, and without a single ornament, save the abundant tresses of her beautiful brown hair, falling unconfined over her neck and shoulders. She was very pale, but her manner was composed and lady-like. She had made up her mind to the very worst, and was not afraid to face it. Counsel was assigned her by the judge, although she had already signified her intention to make no defence—and the trial proceeded.

Percy's testimony, as the most important, was given first. The ring was produced, and identified by Mr. and Mrs. Elmpark, the parents of the deceased, and the next witness was called.

Jane Burton, a servant of the Cedars, testified that on the night of Miss Elmpark's assassination, she had been kept up later than usual by domestic preparations for the expected bridal, and on going to the window to look out, she had seen a slight female figure, in dark clothes, standing under the window of Miss Elmpark's chamber.

She had thought nothing of it at the time, supposing it to have been some one of the servants, or of the numerous guests at that time stopping in the house. The next morning she had found a woman's slipper, soiled and wet, in the back-yard, and being a prudent body, and thinking perhaps it might come to some use, she had put the shoe away. This shoe, on being produced, exactly fitted Agnes Vivian's foot—indeed, it must have been made for it.

Again, John Hardy and his wife, who resided in Carlisle, ten miles from the Cedars, were called, and sworn. The testimony of one will answer for both.

Three years before, Agnes Earle had been on a visit. On the day preceding the murder at the Cedars, early in the afternoon, she had announced her intention of going away to spend the Christmas with a friend, whose name or residence she did not mention.

She had left just before sunset, seeming strangely agitated and nervous, and had not returned until some time after dark on Christmas. She was weary and dispirited, and greatly disinclined to talk about the dreadful murder which had naturally set the whole vicinity in a ferment. And two days afterwards she had gone no one knew whither.

Several other witnesses were brought to prove some unimportant facts, and then Mrs. Vivian was asked the momentous question if she was or was not guilty.

Her counsel made his speech. He was young, and impulsive, and talented, as well; and he sympathized deeply with the prisoner, and, in spite of everything, he, in his heart, believed her innocent. His plea was masterly—he warned the jury against putting too much faith in circumstantial evidence—cited warning cases where guiltless persons had been sacrificed—and besought them to remember mercy, while they sought to propitiate justice.

They were strictly honest, conscientious men—those jurors—and no eloquence of judges or lawyers could sway their settled conviction. They had heard the evidence—and weighed it all—and their verdict, without leaving their seats, was—GUILTY!

Percy Vivian's livid face did not change—but he put his hand to his heart as if something hurt him—half-rising from his seat, and sat down again.

Agnes's face rested on her clasped hands—and those who were near her saw that her lips moved in prayer. She was seeking aid from a Source, which, in that dire extremity, alone could help her.

The sentence pronounced upon her by the judge was that she was to die by the hand of the public executioner, on the 20th day of February next.

Paul Elmpark laughed scornfully. "Speak, Agnes, and tell these people that I am the murderer of Maude Elmpark!"

An excited murmur ran through the court; but his next words hushed every voice into silence.

"Good people, listen to me. You were about to doom to death an innocent woman, beside whose spotless soul those of the best of ye would be black as darkness! Yes, yonder grey-haired demon has hunted her to death, a long premeditated consummation of senseless revenge!"

"With my own hand I would slay him before this tribunal, if I did not desire to preserve him to suffer on in life! Death would be too sweet a thing for him! Aye, Percy Vivian, no wonder you tremble, when you remember that henceforth the hatred, and not the love of your innocent wife will be yours! No wonder you groan, when you remember that she whom you have loved, whom you still love, will hereafter speak your name with loathing, and scorn the remorseful repentance you will doubtless be ready to offer her! I tell you all, again, Agnes Earle never saw Maude Elmpark alive or dead. This hand did the deed. This!"

He held up his right hand to the view of the agitated assemblage. Vivian uttered a hoarse cry and sprang forward, but the blaze in Elmpark's eyes arrested him.

There was something more to be revealed. The man went on rapidly:

"I am a desperate man. I have led a desperate life. Seven years ago I was acting as the mate of a pirate. I was on the high seas—my hand against every man's hand; every man's hand against me. We captured a merchant vessel. Philip Earle, the father of Agnes, was commander of that vessel. She was an Indiaman, on her homeward journey. All the crew that were taken alive walked the plank to swift destruction—save this Captain Earle. Let it suffice that I took an involuntary liking for this man—he was bold and fearless—and I resolved to save him."

"I took him with me to Bombay. His gratitude was intensely fervid. He wanted to live, he said, because somewhere in this country he had a daughter, poor and unprotected, and on her account he wanted to reach home once more. But that was not to be. Soon after our arrival at Bombay he was seized with marsh fever, and in five hours was a corpse. Before he died, with his last remaining strength, he wrote out a short account of what I had done for him, and besought his daughter, Agnes, to be always kind to me, should we ever meet; to remember how much I had suffered for his sake, and to use all her influence to turn me to a better life. And sealing it with a dying effort, he gave it into my keeping, asking me, if I should return to England, to seek out Agnes, inform her of his death, and give her the last message from her father."

"It was some time before I could do as he wished, but a few months more than three years ago, I landed in England. Only the strong desire to see the daughter of the man who had interested me as no other individual ever had done, influenced me to return. But I had no intention whatever of showing myself at home. I wanted all my relations to think me dead. There was no love between us, and I desired no communication."

"With great difficulty, I managed to find Agnes Earle. She was at Carlisle. She read the paper I gave her, and though she shuddered at the thought of my crimes, she was grateful for my kindness to her father."

"Where is the need of entering into particulars? I loved her. I, who had always laughed at the sentiment for which so many young fools are running crazy, loved this Agnes Earle. She would have done anything else to make me happy, but she could not give me her heart. Who blames her? Not I."

"At this time, I first heard of my uncle's bequest to Maude Elmpark, my half-sister, and of my heirship in case of her death. I had always hated Maude—because she won all the tenderness of my mother away from me. What was her life to my gratification? Only that stood between me and a great fortune! I was not accustomed to hold human life as so sacred a thing as to allow the existence of a simple girl to stand in my path. But before I stained my hands with her blood—I made one more appeal to Agnes for her love. If she had given it to me, Maude Elmpark would have lived. But she answered me as before—and wept for my bitter disappointment."

"In my passion, I let drop some vague hints that informed her of what I contemplated doing, and she fainted at my feet. I restored her to partial consciousness, and left her—knowing that her regard for her father's dying injunction would insure my safety. But she could not let matters go on without making what effort she could to save the doomed bride. She walked the ten miles that lay between Carlisle and the Cedars—through the darkness and the snow—to warn Maude of danger—though she would have hidden the source from whence it was expected to come—but she arrived too late to see the one she sought."

"The household had retired. In despairing distress she wandered about the grounds for an hour or two, and then sat down on a stone by the wayside, to rest until morning. Meanwhile, I scaled the grape-vine lattice that covered Maude's chamber-window, and did the deed. Bah! hardened as I am, I do not like to think of it. It was a cowardly thing to strike a woman in the dark. I took the garnet ring from her finger, because I was superstitious enough to believe that it would save the wearer from harm, and escaped as I had come."

"When I reached the road, and had gone a little way, I met Agnes Earle face to face. In a moment she guessed all. She saw the blood on my hands, she noticed the wild desperation of my manner, and I thought she would die on the spot. I caught her up in my arms, and fled with her below the Cedars, and after a long time succeeded in restoring her to herself. And then, and there, I made her take a fearful oath that never, so long as she lived, would she ever breathe a word that might direct the remotest suspicion to me as my sister's murderer."

"I, who would have died to have saved her from danger, held a pistol to her breast, and demanded her promise. And she stood up before me, cold and resolute, and would not be terrified into taking the oath. But, because of the service I had done her father, she would be silent as the grave. I took the garnet ring,

and placed it upon her finger. I believed in its efficacy to ward off evil; and I wanted this woman, whom I loved, to be happy. Yes, I loved her well enough to give her up to another, if thereby her happiness might be secured. I told her to wear the ring on every Christmas eve, and pray for the soul of Paul Elmpark!

"Then I left the country. I did not at once proceed to the Cedars. I was too deep to run my head into the atmosphere of suspicion. No one knew that I was in the country—no one, save Agnes, and my secret was safe with her. I went again to sea, and for two years was a wanderer. Then I came back, and feigned astonishment to find Maude Elmpark dead, and a fortune awaiting me. So I went about free and unsuspected. Agnes wore the garnet ring, and her husband suspected her of the murder. He accused her, and then, for the first time, she was made aware of the fact that the betrothed bride whom he had lost—of whom he had told her—was Maude Elmpark.

"He thought himself sure of his revenge, at last. I wish him joy of it. I might have spoken before, but I wanted this thing to go on until Agnes should learn to hate her husband as her persecutor. I love her still; only that has made me open my lips to confess my own crime.

"There, I have done. Last night the familiar demon that dogs me everywhere showed me my own death. The day was this day, and the hour was noon. Agnes, forgive me, and bless me before I die!"

"I do forgive you, and may God have mercy on your soul!"

"And now, Agnes, one thing more. Tell these people that I have spoken the truth."

She turned her radiant face towards the spell-bound assemblage.

"He has told you the truth," she said, softly.

A wild shout arose—the crowd swayed hither and thither, like the wave of the sea. Cries of "Death to the murderer!" rent the air.

But before a single hand could be laid upon him, a pistol-shot rang out clear and distinct, and Paul Elmpark fell back dead! And simultaneously the city clock struck twelve!

Percy Vivian was taken up insensible. And when, after long hours of anxious care and effort, he came back to life, he was in the raving delirium of brain fever.

For weeks, he lay hovering between life and death; it seemed as though a breath might turn the balance either way. The physicians gave him up, and ceased their endeavours—but Agnes, his wronged wife, would not give him up. Night and day she was beside him, soothing him only as she could, praying continually to Heaven to spare his life.

It was pitiful to witness his sufferings. His cry all the time was "Agnes, Agnes!" He lived over and over again the previous three months—all his terrible despair at believing her guilty—all his great love for her in spite of everything, broke from him, and went home to the heart of the prayerful watcher.

There came a time at last when either life or death must rapidly supersede. It was the crisis, the physicians said, trying to draw Agnes away from the bedside. She kept her place, and by her request, was left alone with her husband.

He woke to consciousness. What passed between them none knew, but the result was perfect peace.

Percy Vivian came back to life and strength; and from that hour he worshipped his wife. He broke the commandment which forbids the setting up of idols, but through the gentle influence of this idol he was led unto the rock of Eternal Truth, and rested there.

THE RAILWAY INTEREST IN PARLIAMENT.—The railway interest in the House of Lords and Commons begins to be something formidable, as there will be no less than one hundred directors of railways found among the members of the Lower House, and forty-seven in the Lords.

A NEW POTATO DISEASE.—A woman in Ayr found in the centre of a potato, to her surprise and pleasure, a gold wedding-ring! As the potato was perfectly sound, the ring, which probably found its way to the soil in manure, must have been inclosed by the tuber in the process of growth.

ENQUÊTE.—The Princess of Wales, it is gossiped, submitted very reluctantly to the obligations of etiquette in the matter of wet-nursing the baby. The Prince of Wales would, it is also said, have willingly indulged the natural wish of a young mother; but Court traditions were too strong, even for the Royal wish.

THE DATE OF SHAKESPEARE'S BIRTH.—Some doubts have been entertained as to the date of Shakespeare's birthday. He entered on his fifty-third year a moment after midnight April 22-23, 1616. Consequently, the statement in the inscription that he died

on the 23rd of April, 1616, in the fifty-third year of his age, is consistent with his having been born on the 23rd of April, 1564. So far, therefore, as the evidence of the register and inscription goes, we have no reason to doubt the common tradition that Shakespeare died on his birthday.

SOLID SMOKE.—A working man states: "Since I gave up smoking, I have put into a box the amount that I formerly spent every week in tobacco. At the end of the year, on opening the box, I have counted out a sum of money sufficient to provide myself with periodicals and newspapers for the year, which sum I called 'Solid Smoke!' A friend one day called and asked me, 'Have you found the philosopher's stone?' 'No,' I replied, 'I don't turn the smoke into gold, but prevent the gold from turning into smoke.'"

CORNIE.

"Oh dear, oh dear!" and the slight, white-clad form of my little friend tossed restlessly upon the bed. I rose and bent quickly over the pillow where the little pale face rested so wearily, and saw that large tears were stealing slowly over her cheeks.

"What is it, my darling? Are you suffering so much?" I asked, anxiously, pushing the short rings of brown hair away from the poor, pale forehead.

"What can I do for you?"

"Nothing, nothing—thank you," she sobbed. "Oh, I feel so miserable!"

Again she tossed over, and this time buried her face in the pillow, and began to sob convulsively. I was grieved beyond expression. Everything to cheer, comfort or relieve had proved unavailing. Daily, Cornie Prince was sinking beyond our reach. What could we do to save her?

Filled with painful emotions, I sat on the side of her couch, holding the little trembling hands, and striving to soothe her. Finally a thought occurred to me which caused me to start almost abruptly:

"Cornie, I want to know why you are fading away so rapidly? What is on your mind?"

She looked up at me with great eyes full of astonishment, still wet with the rain of tears. Then she answered with tremulous lips:

"Is not my darling far away from me, exposed to danger, perhaps death? It is killing me."

"That is not enough to put you here, Cornie. There is something else. You are no exception to others in this sorrowful story. Thousands like yourself have given up all they hold dear for our country's sake. Many have seen them go to return no more. Others have received the intelligence that their best-beloved ones have been maimed, crippled for life. It is the daily story. Yet they are not pining away like this, as those without hope might do. Your darling is alive, well, in no imminent danger, and may not be for some time to come. So I think that, with one like you, ready to bear all things as you have proved yourself—there must be some other cause for grief. I do not want to intrude upon the privacy of your feelings, yet I think if you could tell me your trouble, it would be a relief to do so. Am I not your friend, dear Cornie? Will you not trust me?"

She flung a pair of trembling arms around me impulsively, and sobbed there for a moment upon my bosom. Then she spoke huskily:

"I will tell you, though you will think me silly, perhaps. But it has worried me so long that I can't bear it."

"You know it is just a year now since I was married. Two little months my dear husband was with me, then duty called him away. Oh, Kate, you will never understand how I loved him, or how it hurt me to give him up. I thought it would kill me. The morning he left me, I threw myself upon the bed and hid the pillow to hush the cries of agony that rose to my lips, lest my grief should make our parting harder for my darling. Oh, how I suffered. Every possible evil that could befall him, and prevent his return to me, I conjured up. But I think, after a while, my better nature was triumphant, and I grew more calm. I know it was wicked to love as I did. My love was an idolatry, and I began to fear God would punish me by taking him away from me for ever.

"Time passed. His letters came frequently—such long, loving letters. You have heard some of them, and can guess what a source of comfort they were. They seemed to express such a love as I felt. I was so proud and happy to be so idolized; and he was so noble, talented, and beloved by others. Ah, you know how much cause I have to love my husband, and how much I do love him! Of what use, then, to dwell upon it?"

"The spring passed. How hard I tried to be patient and hopeful. I went into society to chase away a tendency to morbid brooding over injurious fancies. I read, studied, walked, rode, played—everything; and I do think I should still be going on hope-

fully but for the fear that intruded itself in spite of me. His letters came less frequently, even shorter, and not so loving as at first. It has grown worse and worse ever since the summer. Autumn has come now, and two months nearly have passed without a line from him. Oh, Kate, what can it mean? If he has ceased to love me I shall die."

Here then was the secret. She thought she had lost her husband's love, and her little, tender heart was breaking. For a time I could say nothing. The position I held was a painful one. My poor little friend was standing upon dangerous ground. How to save her the best way became a puzzling question. At length I said, gravely:

"Cornie, doubts of your husband's love are unworthy the high tone of character you have always evinced. Do you know what terrible injustice you are doing him?"

"Oh, Kate, I don't mean to be unjust. I am only fearful. I couldn't blame him, I think, if it were so, for men don't feel as strongly as women do. Besides, I am such a puny, helpless little thing, while he is so noble, so manly. I wouldn't wonder if he forgot to love as I do. Still, it would kill me, I am sure."

"My child, you do not think properly upon this subject. Else you would never say that men feel less keenly. Their love is as deep and fervent, I am assured. But they are in a different position. We must not expect such expressions from them as we are able to give. Just reflect for a little while, my friend; draw a comparison between your own and your husband's relative positions at the present time, and see if you cannot find a good reason for what your morbid fancy would teach you to construe into neglect."

She looked up at me with eager, wondering eyes, and said, simply:

"Go on."

"Well," I continued, "begin now with yourself. Since he was called away, by your own showing, you have found nothing to do but to 'kill time'—first in one way, then another. No wholesome, hearty labour to absorb the mind, expand the intellect, keep in play all the better feelings of your nature. Only a wild, feverish round, devoted to the one object, namely, to enable you to drag through the dread period of his absence. Is not this true?"

"Yes. But I could not help it. What else could I do?"

"No matter now. We will talk of that further presently. Having looked at your case, now let us look at his. What do his letters say of his employments?"

"You shall see for yourself," she answered, rising and taking a carefully-tied package of letters from a drawer in her dressing-case. Sitting down upon the bed, she untied them, and spread the beautifully-written sheets open upon her lap. Patiently I prepared to listen. A long array was before me; but since I was to judge between these two, for the sake of the happiness of the one nearest, perhaps of both eventually, it was but right for me to undertake the task with my eyes fully opened in every respect.

These first epistles were miracles of tenderness, filled to overflowing with a love that broke forth in the most beautiful and glowing language. The fond young husband had a habit of writing daily, a sort of diary in which every thought and feeling was faithfully portrayed. The letters were long, and came at intervals of a week or fortnight, at most. They were not busy then, only "cruising about," waiting for active duty, he said, frequently.

From their tone I perceived that he assumed the part of comforter, often reasoning away fears and repinings. Eventually, her own letters must have been full of discontent, forebodings, and prayers for his return—prayers to which he could only answer, "my darling, I cannot." He was not his own master, but a servant—a slave to the duties laid upon him.

So it went on for a time. By-and-bye came miseries of a different tone; still loving, still kind, but more hurried, and telling of toilsome days and nights, dangerous vigils, exposure, fatigue, everything attendant upon an active and laborious life, but, through all, breathing the deep, unchanged, fervent devotion that characterized him as a loyal husband, a noble man. I listened with the most intense interest, quietly pointing out the changes as they came, and explaining my thoughts to her concerning them.

Sometimes letters written in moments stolen from sleep, while all his companions lay exhausted around, would lie for weeks in his possession ere he could get an opportunity to send them to her. I pointed out the dates, the notes, and little interludes with a feeling of reverence for the man who could thus toil, brave all, dare all, suffer all, and yet, in the midst of it, sit down and pen such lines to the one he loved, desiring to comfort her, never thinking of self.

When she had finished, she looked up from the

fast hurriedly-written half-sheet, a grieved expression lingering round the sweet young mouth.

"See—the last—only one little half-sheet," she said. "Three long, weary weeks—yes, four—of waiting, filled with tears, suspense, agony, and then this was all that he had to comfort me."

I took the letter from her hand, reading aloud from the page:

"MY OWN DEAR WIFE.—We are before Sebastopol, carrying on the siege. Success must follow our many and unyielding efforts. Day and night we know no rest. We are nearly all of us worn out. Now, as I write, my comrades are sleeping for a few moments around me; any moment ready to spring up to duty, perhaps to danger. Our good vessel has borne much. Her pretty hull is all battered and beaten with the conflicts of war; but she will soon have a chance, I hope, to put on a new dress, when Sebastopol shall have fallen to us as a grand victory. When that time comes, I shall hope to see my wife, my blessed, angel wife once more. Oh, the joy of that reunion! In the last three weeks, I have stolen moments to write a great deal, but found no way to send to you the great love coined into words. This fragment may never reach you—it is but a mere chance if it does. And, knowing this, I am unwilling to send all I have written until I can make sure it can reach you. Time is so precious I cannot bear that one word should be lost that I may find myself able to write. I shall hope they may yet help you to bear my absence till we meet again."

"Oh, Cornie, what do you find here to complain of? See how he thinks of you, amid everything," I added, at the conclusion. "Darling, you have been making misery for yourself and him."

"For him!" she cried, in astonishment; "for him. How?"

"Go back to some of those letters in your hand, and see how sadly he dwells upon the anguish you have given vent to in your letters. To judge by their tone, one would think you had written of nothing but your loneliness, your misery, and begged him always to return to you."

"Well, and was I wrong, when it was true? I was agonized in his absence; I thought of nothing but his return—urged nothing but that."

And at the same time knew it vain. Before you married him, you knew he was in the navy, and could not resign unless compelled to by ill-health. Think well, and you will see for yourself that you have been selfish, unreasonable, and forcing upon him a double burden. In addition to his own grief at separation, he has his duties—the dangers of his position, and all your burdens to bear. Tell me, Cornie, is this the way you are going to help your husband through life? Is this to be your mode of lightening his difficulties—smoothing his pathway? Answer me candidly, if you think you are just right."

"Oh, no, no, not as you put it!" she said, in deprecating accents. "Katie, I have been blind—unpardoningly blind and selfish. I can see it all now. Oh, I said I was unworthy of him, my brave, good, noble husband! What can I do? Advise me, dear Katie. Tell me how to act."

"If I must advise you, you must promise to follow my suggestions faithfully, or it will prove useless."

"I do promise you," she hastened to say, eagerly.

"Then seek out some good, wholesome employment. Let every hour be filled with something. Allow yourself no time for doubts and brooding. Live less in imaginary worlds, and more in the real. You have your books, music, &c. Very well. Give them due attention. Practice and study well, but don't weary yourself trying to create an interest in these pursuits, without a better motive than merely to kill time. Do it for the sake of the pleasure you will give your husband on his return, in the excellence of your acquirements."

Her eyes brightened with an enthusiastic impulse; but she said, earnestly:

"That is well enough; but all my time cannot be filled up thus."

"True. You will want outdoor exercise. Often you will want to take a walk. Perhaps in some of these walks a beggar may come to your side, pleading for a 'penny to buy bread.' They often accost me with this plea. Well, suppose you were to stop and ask the child questions. It might tell you a pitiful tale of suffering. Its father dead, mother sick, little brothers and sisters suffering for bread. The dreary winter will come ere long, bitterly cold. You can't turn away heedlessly from the poor little ragged petitioner. You go home with him to see if he has told the truth, and there find the reality worse than the little quivering lips had power to picture. Oh, how your sympathetic heart will ache! You will try to think what you can do. Perhaps you will apply to some kind physician, and ask him for a prescription for the sick mother. A few pence you will not miss to buy the medicine, which she may take hopefully and thankfully, as she gains relief. But

this is not half you will be prompted to do. You will think of many cast-off garments in your closets, useless to you, but holding warmth and decency in their folds for those little ones. You eagerly cut and sew them up, smiling to see how readily those little white fingers fashion the little garments, so strange to your sight. Then you want to see them in the 'new clothes' you have made, and survey the effect with the newest, sweetest sensations of pleasure. How your heart beats to note the gleeful, half-shy, but happy little faces, as they parade their new possessions! How the poor mother's pale face and humid eyes haunt you with the most thrilling sense of emotion, as her feeble hands carry yours to her lips with the gratified 'God bless you' trembling through them."

"Oh, Kate," she breathed, "why have I seen nothing of this before? I have been blind, indeed! My life has been one long, miserably selfish dream!"

"It is not too late to begin now, dear Cornie!" I said, tenderly clasping her in my arms. "You are young, and proper care and exercise will soon make you strong again. Every day you will follow your husband's example, and write him a full account of the events that occur. Tell him just how you employ your time. Write to him cheerfully, hopefully. Paint glowing pictures of home that will make him long to fly to you, the moment the bonds of duty can be flung aside. Never breathe a word of complaint. Comfort his weariness and solitude all you can, and make him feel how much he has need of you. So shall you keep his heart for ever, in bonds that shall outlive this life, and become immortal."

She dropped her head upon my shoulder, and wept softly, murmuring:

"You are my good angel. What could I do without you?"

"Much. You only need a 'first lesson.' I shall have to come to you presently. You will soon have far outstripped me."

She smilingly shook her head; but I saw that new resolves had been kindled, and for the time dropped the subject.

Several weeks passed. Every new day brought fresh stories from the active little thing who had taken up the burden of a new life. She progressed rapidly. Sometimes she flagged a little, but soon rallied, to go on more steadily than before.

Day by day a new and beautiful light shone from the sweet eyes, now no longer heavy with weeping, but bright and pure in the flood of holy feeling born within her—a pure, womanly sympathy.

She had ceased to look far away in the mystic future with dreamy idleness, and speculate on the misery it might bring, and with busy fingers daily gathered up new jewels of experience to twine into her young life.

The effects produced by this new phase of affairs became apparent in everything around her. But in nothing more than in the tone of her husband's letters.

He hailed the change with an eager joy that found vent in fervent outpourings of affection.

It seemed as if no word could express the fullness of the sentiment; and the great desire to be near her, to see her again, was almost beyond endurance. He was so rejoiced that she had learned patience—that she could be cheerful, and encourage him to duty.

Half the burden of his life was taken away when he knew that she could bear her fate cheerfully.

It was a sweet and touching thing to have her come to me with these treasures—holding them in her hands as if afraid some thought-jewel or tender word might fall away from the white-sheet and be lost; then to hear her read them in her tremulous, glad tones, lifting her eyes often from the page, to give some strong expression of thankfulness for this boon that had been granted at last.

She was so sure of his love now. She could see so plainly where the trouble had all lain, and, with humid eyes, would upbraid herself for the past, till brought back again by the blessed reality to the sweetness of the present.

Was not this something worth striving for—to be so loved, so blessed by a dear one in whom her life centred all its hopes? He called her his guardian angel; told her how he was cheered and strengthened by her letters.

They came to him like blessed ministering spirits, when he felt most worn and sad, and felt the need of comfort and sympathy. Whenever he had a leisure moment they were his companions, and he would read them with a fancy she was talking to him. They led his thoughts into better channels; were his associates—dearer and more entertaining than any comrade around him. They should keep his feet always in strange paths, until her open little hand could guide him over dangerous places.

Already they had led him gently to thoughts of higher, holier things. He was beginning to comprehend more of the purpose for which life was given, and to strive to fulfil his mission. In her simple, child-

like wisdom, she was teaching him great truths, till now unheeded.

"Can it be that I—I, poor, insignificant little thing that I am, have this power?" she would murmur, with a great wonder brooding over her young face. "I could not have believed or hoped it. Yet it is so."

Reader, if like Cornie, you have been walking blindly, remember the same light will guide you into right paths. You, too, will be bewildered by the evidence of your own power, and intoxicated with the sweetness of the new joys that performance of duty always brings. No one is so weak they can do nothing. The most insignificant of mortals have power for good inherent in them if it were only brought out by will and action.

B. S. A.

LIFE'S AUTUMN.

LIKE the leaf, life has its fading. We speak and think of it with sadness, just as we think of the autumn season. But there should be no sadness at the fading of a life that has done well its work. If we rejoice at the advent of a new life, if we welcome the coming of a new pilgrim to the uncertainties of this world's way, why should there be so much gloom when all these uncertainties are past, and life at its waning wears the glory of a completed task?

Beautiful as is childhood in its freshness and innocence, its beauty is that of untried life. It is the beauty of promise, of spring in the bud. A holier and rarer beauty the waning of a life of faith and of duty wears. It is the beauty of a thing completed; and as men come together to congratulate each other when some great work has been achieved, and see in its concluding nothing but gladness, so ought we to feel when the setting sun flings back its beams upon a life that has answered well life's purpose.

When the bud drops blighted, and mildew blights the early grain, and there goes all hope of harvest, one may well feel sad; but when the ripened year sinks amid garniture of autumn flowers and leaves, why should we regret or murmur?

THE PRICE OF A SILVER MINN.—A thousand dollars an inch is the selling price of one of the California silver mines.

THE COCOA-NUT IN ENGLAND.—The cocoa-nut tree has been hitherto universally barren in Europe, but there is just now in the Duke of Northumberland's conservatory, at St. Albans House, a palm with a nut securely "set," and advancing steadily to maturity.

HORSE-RACING AT CAIRO.—There were races last month for the first time, at Cairo, at which the Viceroy was present. All the prizes were carried off by Arab horses; but it is expected that the English will endeavour to retrieve their name at the next meeting to be held in May, at Alexandria, for it cannot be doubted that a good English horse will have no difficulty in beating Arabs at any distance. The horses which ran at Cairo were Blazeaway, Young Syntax, Tadcaster, and Engraver's Daughter; none passed the post.

THE POWER OF ENDURANCE.—According to an American paper, the greatest power of endurance of such hardships as belong to a soldier's life belongs to men over thirty-five years of age; that men from eighteen to thirty are ten times on the sick list where those older are only once; that the records of the hospitals around Washington develop the fact that, aside from surgical cases, the patients there under thirty-five are as forty to one over that age; consequently, a sound man of forty, and of temperate habits, will endure more fatigue and hard treatment than one equally sound at the age of twenty.

DREADFUL ACCIDENT.—A dreadful occurrence has lately taken place at the menagerie in the Islington Agricultural Hall. One of the keepers, named Greaves, was engaged in pushing some straw between the bars of the lions, either to keep it in the cage, or to attract their attention, and further familiarize himself to them. While doing this, one lion suddenly made a spring upon his hand, and, fastening its fangs into it, drew him by the arm inward. The roar and excitement of the first animal attracting the attention of the second, it sprang upon the arm and mutilated it in a fearful manner. The screams of the poor man attracted the other keepers, who at once set to work to labouring the lions over his head and eyes, in order to make them loose their hold. This only tended to increase the ferocity of the animals, which, with loud yells, commenced tearing the flesh from the poor victim's arm and hand with their claws. It was not until the brutes were nearly blinded with the blows inflicted upon their eyes that they were induced to relinquish their grips, when poor Greaves was drawn away with his mangled limb through the bars, and fell fainting into the arms of those who had rescued him from his horrible position.



THE SECRET CHAMBER.

CHAPTER VII.

SIR HUGH replied to the letter of Hoover and Co., assuring them that an agent, clothed with full powers to settle the estate of the deceased Mr. Winston, would be sent over to Amsterdam in a short time, and expressed the hope that the lawyers would have everything arranged for the speedy transfer of the property to his possession.

The change in his son's prospects had a beneficial effect upon his own health, and he found himself rapidly recovering his powers of locomotion. This was especially agreeable to him, as Vernor every day inquired when he would be able to conduct him to the secret chamber, for the young man still pertinaciously dwelt on his desire to explore its mysteries.

Sir Hugh vainly endeavoured to evade the promise he had made, for he shrank with nervous dread from the thought of entering the place with which so many dark memories were connected. But Vernor would listen to no excuses, and he declared that on the fulfilment of his father's pledge rested his acceptance of Ethel as his future wife. If Sir Hugh forfeited his word, he would also retract, and seek his fortune in his own way; after all, he would probably do better for himself than to give his freedom in exchange for the wealth it would purchase. He did not really care for the child, and he but played a part toward her, to please his father.

Thus goaded on, Sir Hugh nerved himself to the task of entering the vaults beneath the old building alone at a late hour of the night. He provided himself with a dark lantern, and selected several keys from an old bunch that had lain for years unused in a closet in his room.

By opening the door which had long been closed he could descend to the vaults, and he preferred this to stirring the park to the outlet through which the gipsy had penetrated to the place.

When the household was buried in sleep, Sir Hugh lit his lantern, and crossing a narrow room which divided his own apartment from the cells once occupied by the monks, he fitted the rusty key in the lock, and with much effort succeeded in turning it. At length the door opened, and a damp, mouldy scent greeted him from the badly-ventilated corridor.

He stepped in and flashed his light into the dusty floor, and heavy oak-doors which closed upon the dormitories once occupied by the monks. The walls were covered with cobwebs; and bats, disturbed by

[SIR HUGH METHURN VISITS THE SECRET CHAMBER.]

the light, fluttered wildly through the long and narrow passage.

Summoning all his natural hardihood, Sir Hugh walked rapidly forward and gained the door at the further extremity of the corridor. This opened into the chapel, a gothic temple of considerable size, which was falling into decay. The altar was broken down, and the pictures which had once adorned the walls were cut and defaced by the violence of the soldiers who had first desecrated its holy precincts.

More than a century had elapsed since the event, and time and neglect had nearly finished what man began.

Tradition said that the altar-steps had been stained with the blood of the officiating priest who refused to yield to the orders of Henry VIII. the property which had been consecrated to God.

The feeble light that glimmered on broken chalices, and fragments of consecrated candles, showed that a struggle had taken place on the spot dedicated to the very holy of holies; but the present visitor had no reverence for the relics of a faith which he and his had long repudiated, and he strode past the altar to the crumbling remains of a reading-desk, and placing his lantern upon the floor, kneeled down to examine the flagging beneath.

He drew out a dagger, and scraped away the accumulated dust around a smooth, square stone, and then, pressing hard upon the edge, it slowly arose, and revealed a flight of steps, which seemed to have been rudely cut from the solid rock.

Carefully guarding his light, the baronet forced his body through this aperture, and propping back the trapdoor, descended into the labyrinth of vaults below. A person unacquainted with the locality must soon have become hopelessly lost in their windings, for the subterranean apartments extended beneath the whole of the old building, and were arranged with bewildering disregard to architectural rules.

But Sir Hugh was familiar with every foot of the route he must traverse, and he strode forward without pausing to note the dreary echo of his steps as they reverberated through the desolate waste he was traversing. He at length stopped in front of a damp, mouldy looking wall, and turning his light upon it, saw that the entrance he sought was already open. It was an oblong block of stone, much larger than the one he had recently lifted, which had been sprung back and left resting upon the cunningly concealed hinges.

With an oath, Sir Hugh muttered that the gipsy had been there to open the way for him, and, without hesitating, he thrust his lantern in the vault, and then

followed it himself. He straightened himself, and looked around with a shudder, for he recalled the moment when a corpse-like form had been borne through that aperture, and taken by him and his accomplice to the living death that awaited her.

The room was about twenty feet square, and nothing was seen in it but a flight of steps, which wound upward to a trapdoor in the floor above.

Sir Hugh recovered himself, and, drawing a deep breath, approached the stairs. Slowly and reluctantly he mounted them, for as he drew near the bourne of his pilgrimage, even his cold, hard heart failed him.

"It was too bad of Vernor to exact this from me," he muttered, as he stood with his arm lifted to touch the spring which would open the way above him. "My heart fails me at the thought of what I may find there."

At that moment his knees tottered, his face blanched, and his hair was glued to his temples by the cold dew that arose upon them, for he heard the muffled sound of a death-chant coming from the sealed apartment above. He sat down on the steps, breathless and appalled; the dirge swelled louder, and he despairingly asked:

"Oh, Arabella, has your outraged spirit been permitted to return to chant your own requiem in the ears of him who slowly murdered you? Yet I must go on; I can never go back without fathoming this mystery."

With sudden desperation he lifted his arm, thrust back the door above his head, and a dazzling flash of light streamed upon him from the apartment he had expected to find as silent and dark as the grave it had become.

Sir Hugh was no coward, neither was he superstitious, and after the first moment of stunning surprise, he gathered courage to lift himself through the aperture and look upon the strange scene the room presented.

It was brilliantly illuminated, and the light fell upon walls draped with faded damask, on rich old-fashioned furniture covered with the same material. But what fascinated the eye of the visitor was a niche in the wall from which the hangings were drawn back, exposing a heavy stone sarcophagus, before which a kind of altar had been made by a table that was drawn in front of it, on which the candles that lighted the apartment were placed.

A small square of velvet was thrown over the coffin, on which was embroidered:

"Arabella Vernor—Lady Methurn—Aged 23."

The chant still continued, though no one was visible, and Sir Hugh glared upon the heavy satin

hangings of the bed, which were closely drawn, and hoarsely said:

"Come forth, Minchen, for to you I owe this shameful mockery. You are concealed behind those curtains, wailing your cursed death-song. 'Come forth, I say!'"

At this peremptory command, the gipsy put aside the heavy folds of silk that sheltered her and stepped out into the light.

She was dressed in white, and wore a wreath of scarlet flowers twined around her grey locks. The dress was also embroidered with gay colours, and its youthfulness contrasted in a ghastly manner with her worn and faded appearance. She made him a mocking reverence, and said:

"Yes, Hugh Methurn, I am here, celebrating the obsequies of your wife in the festive dress in which you first saw and loved me. See how carefully I have preserved it; every flower is unfaded, and I—am what you see me. Strange, isn't it, that the work of human hands should last longer than that of the divine architect? If God did not intend the spirit to live in another form, he would have fastened the casket to endure longer. What does he mean to do with your spirit and mine, Methurn? Have you any idea?"

"I neither know nor care," replied the baronet, roughly. "What does this mockery mean, and why have you assumed that dress, which is as unsuited to you as to the corpse in yonder coffin. Ugh! the trappings of youth on age and wrinkles is too hideous a sight."

The woman laughed wildly.

"Yet when I first wore this dress you swore to love me eternally; you vowed that your passion should know no change. Oh! Hugh Methurn, it is well for me that nothing you can now say has power to wound me. Come—let us chant together the services for your dead wife. They have been long delayed, but that was because the chief mourner was absent—ha! ha!"

Again her discordant laugh rang out, and the listener shuddered.

"Woman, how did you know that I would come hither? and why have you prepared this scene to greet me?"

"Because it chimes with my humour, Sir Hugh; and I divined that you must come hither to prepare the room for the inspection of the young heir. I made my preparations, and I have awaited you every night since I learned that your health was mending. Oh! it was brave to watch beside that stone sarcophagus in which my rival lies, and know that she can never again step forth to the light of day; though it was little of that she saw for months before her death."

"Then she is really there?" said Sir Hugh, pointing to the coffin, with a cold dew bursting from his brow. "I feared as much; but this niche can be closed up. The hangings can be made to conceal it, for Vernor must know nothing of the tragedy they conceal."

"Of course she is there, Sir Hugh; for how could I have removed her without assistance? and you refused to come hither after her death. It was lucky that the penitent's couch had been left by the old monks; it made a capital mausoleum for the Lady of Methurn; and she withered away to such an anatomy through fretting for her freedom, that I lifted her into it as easily as I would a child after the breath left her body."

"And she has lain there for fifteen years unheeded—might have lain there through all time, but for words which aroused the curiosity of my son. The secret of the chamber might have died with me but for that. Now, Vernor insists on knowing it, and I have no alternative but to show him the entrance. But, after all, it may be useful to him in the future."

"In the same way, Sir Hugh?" said the gipsy, significantly.

The baronet started, and he quickly asked:

"What do you mean?"

"Only that, as you married a woman for her fortune, and put her away to get possession of it, your son may follow in your footsteps."

"He will not do that, for he will have no devil to tempt him to the wickedness as you did me," he fiercely replied.

"He will be sure to find one," retorted the woman. "Like father, like son," says the old proverb, and your son is as hard and unscrupulous as you were in your youth—nay, as you now are. Of late I have seen him dancing attendance on the little girl who seems suddenly to have become an object of importance to him and to you. I have heard of the presents heaped on her, and I know that you do nothing without a motive. Is the child already Lady Clifton, Sir Hugh?"

"No—nor ever likely to be, as far as I know; but I do not choose to be called to account by you. Assist me to remove from the room every evi-

dence of my wife's stay in it, and then let us part for ever."

"They are already removed, Methurn. I performed that service for you before you came, for I knew that would be your object in coming hither. But we are strangely neglecting the funeral rites; the relics have long waited for them, but it is never too late to perform a duty."

She darted behind the bed-curtains, and again appeared wrapped in a black cloak which covered her person to her feet, and her grey hair, from which she had removed the scarlet wreath, floated in silvery masses upon her shoulders.

"It's as good as a masquerade," she lightly said, as she again stood before him. "Eh, my dear baronet, how do I sustain the character of chief mourner at my lady's funeral?"

There was a mingling of the grotesque and the horrible in the scene that made even Sir Hugh's iron nature quail, and he sank down upon a chair which had been drawn in front of the table.

"That is the very seat I prepared for you," said the gipsy, "and here is the prayer-book. You can read the service, and I will make the responses. It will be nothing like the gorgeous burial that filled the parish church with mourners on that other day; but this will be real, and the other was only a sham. Who but you and I knew that the coffin they entombed with so much state was filled with stones, and the living Lady Methurn was incarcerated in this chamber? Ho, ho! Sir Hugh, you got the money, but I got what was better to me—revenge—revenge upon my rival."

She placed a book before him, but now, aroused to a pitch of uncontrollable passion, he dashed it to the other side of the apartment, and furiously said:

"Have done with your mocking bewilderment, and shut out that thing from sight. Drop the hangings over it, and put out your lights. I cannot tarry here all night listening to your babbling."

"So you refuse to give the poor lady Christian sepulture? Well, it's no business of mine; she is safe enough yonder without it, and if you are satisfied, so am I."

Sir Hugh covered his face with his hands, and his strong frame quivered with emotion. He could remorselessly condemn his wife to the captivity that destroyed her, but when brought face to face with the stony receptacle in which she lay, a trembling dread seized him, and he asked of his inmost soul if some terrible retribution would not yet overtake him.

The marriage settlement of Lady Methurn had given him the entire control of her fortune in the event of her decease; the woman who now stood beside him, deeply as he now loathed her, had at that time unlimited power over him, and he yielded to the temptation to rid himself of his wife, urged on by his own capidity, and the furious jealousy of her rival.

Lady Methurn had no near relatives, and when she lay ill in her secluded country home, Minchen, in the disguise of a nurse, was placed in charge of her. The report was spread through the country that she was attacked with that terrible scourge in those days, the typhus fever, and the Priory was avoided by every one. The servants feared to enter the suite of rooms appropriated to her use, and Sir Hugh and the nurse were her only attendants.

The infant was removed and placed in the care of a healthy countrywoman, and the two deadly enemies of the poor lady had the field clear to themselves. A leaden coffin was procured, in which sufficient weight was placed, and then sealed up to prevent the contagion of the disease from spreading. The man who tremblingly performed this service really believed that the body of Lady Methurn was within it, and he escaped from the apartment as soon as his task was completed.

In the meantime the helpless victim had been placed under the influence of narcotics, and conveyed to the room whose existence was only known to the two who had prepared it for her use. One of the deserted apartments had been denuded of its furniture, and by night, Sir Hugh and his accomplice conveyed it to the secret chamber and arranged it themselves.

Lady Methurn awoke from her long and deathlike sleep to find herself a prisoner, shut out from social life, from light, from hope. She never again beheld her husband, and her late nurse appeared before her in her true character, that of a jealous and vindictive fury.

The gipsy, liberally supplied with money by Sir Hugh, remained in the neighbourhood of the Priory, and every third night she came to visit her charge, to supply her with food, and to watch over her rapid decay. Broken in health and crushed in spirit, the struggle did not last long. Within a year from her incarceration the helpless woman died, and the being that hated her had the satisfaction of placing her worn and wasted body in the stone coffin which had been placed by the monks in this chamber of penance as the couch of its occupant.

At every visit it had been exhibited to the unfortunate lady by her relentless enemy, with the assurance that it was to become her tomb; that such was the unalterable will of her husband. Lady Methurn had great pride, and a very high spirit, combined with little real strength of character. She soon sank into a state of apathy from which even the taunts and insults of the gipsy could not arouse her, and she gradually faded away, until one night, when the persecutor came, she found her lying lifeless on the bed. She placed her in the sarcophagus, and with immense labour closed the heavy lid over her wrongs and woes.

Then Minchen sought Sir Hugh and demanded as the price of her services that he should redeem his pledge to make her his wife if she would enable him to grasp the fortune he coveted. He refused; threatened her with the penalties of the law for what she had done, and commanded her to leave England. Even while trampling upon her, he relied upon her love for him to save him from exposure. He knew that she would never denounce him, and she never did. He gave her money, and she again betook herself to the vagabond life of her people.

In obedience to his commands, for years she wandered in foreign lands accompanied by her son; but suddenly the wish to return to the Priory seized her. The son of her rival was now approaching maturity, and in her heart was a feeling of bitter hatred toward him who occupied the position which should have been filled by the eldest born. Melchior was a nameless and homeless wanderer, while Vernor held the station which should have been his.

Again the gipsy's camp appeared in the old woodland in which Minchen and Sir Hugh had first met, and with a heart filled with bitter memories, mingled with no feeling of remorse for what she had done, the prematurely aged and wrinkled woman again stood face to face with the man she had so adoringly loved; so recklessly aided to commit a crime of even deeper dye than that of murder.

That meeting has been described, and here she had awaited him for a final settlement of her claims upon him. Minchen picked up the book which the baronet had so furiously dashed from him, placed it on the table, and began to loosen the cords which held back the hangings in front of the sarcophagus. Suddenly she paused and asked:

"Wouldn't you like to look upon your dead wife, Methurn? In this atmosphere, by this time she has withered away to a brown mummy, and I would like you to see that her beauty is gone as well as my own. Come, let us raise the stone lid and look in upon her."

Sir Hugh lifted his face with an expression of horror, and hoarsely said:

"Are you a demon, or a woman? Do you think I would dare to look upon the creature I so fearfully wronged?"

"I am what your cruelty has made me," was the fierce response; "a tigress, perhaps, but I am no worse than you, though I have the nerve to face the consequences of my own acts. You could bring hither the living form in your arms and thrust it in this den, yet you shrink from looking on the dead one from which the spirit that suffered has long since fled. Ho! ho! Methurn, that is a nice distinction, and by making it I suppose you claim to be more humane than I am; but neither of us have much to boast of in that line."

"No," replied Sir Hugh, in a subdued tone. "We have both played a terrible part. Arabella's temper made me hard and cruel toward her. She irritated me every day by her arrogant opposition to my wishes, and I was easily wrought on to rid myself of her by shutting her up here. I have sometimes thought of it with remorse, but I believe that you have had no such feeling."

"That may well be, for she loved you, but she rivalled me; then wherefore shall I feel remorse? You will say that you were wrought on by me, I suppose; let it be so; it has been so from the beginning of creation; the first man cravenly said to his Maker, 'The woman thou gavest me tempted me.' Follow the example of the father of the human race, and throw the blame of your own greed upon me; I can bear that, as I have borne so many other wrongs at your hands."

"Minchen, this recrimination is useless. Let us put the room in order, for to-morrow I have promised to bring Vernor hither, and show him the secret of the entrance."

"How will you account for the presence of the furniture?"

"I have already told him that the chamber was used by refugees in Cromwell's time, and he will naturally think the furniture was placed there for their comfort."

He arose, drew down the hangings, and hurriedly arranged them against the wall. Then he said:

"I will place this heavy table against the recess

and no one will imagine that anything is concealed behind it."

The table was lifted back, the lights extinguished, all save one, which the gipsy carried, and looking around the apartment, Sir Hugh raised his lantern to depart.

"Come," he said, "daylight must not find me here; let us leave this dreary place."

"Not till you have done something for my son, Sir Hugh. Is it just that Melchoir should be a wandering vagrant, while every indulgence is granted to his younger brother? If you can afford such presents as you have lately lavished upon your ward, you can also give to your own son."

"I gave you money when we last met, and I shall soon have it in my power to give you much more. What else can you demand?"

"I ask an annuity for Melchoir's life. Settle on him a sum sufficient for his wants and mine, and I will leave you to repent in peace."

"If you will pledge yourself to lay aside your enmity to Vernor, I will comply with your demand. You hate the boy; you would do evil to him if the chance arose."

"I promise it. I will do him no wrong," said the woman, in reply, for the thought arose in her mind that the blows given by Vernor to his half-brother had made him a far bitterer and more reckless enemy than even she would have proved; but of this Sir Hugh knew nothing. "Give me the means of living, and we will again go far from you."

"They shall be yours," replied the baronet. "In a few weeks I shall have it in my power to provide for you liberally, and I pledge myself to do so. In the meantime, I command you to keep clear of my son. I would not on many accounts, have Vernor know the history of that portion of my past life in which you are concerned."

"I would indeed be a pretty record to lay bare to the child of her who lies yonder; but I warn you that unless you keep your word to me this time, I will bring him hither, and tell him the whole story."

"I shall not fail; but even if I should, I would not advise you to attempt that," said Sir Hugh, in a threatening manner. "I would crush you, and all your tribe, as remorselessly as I would deal with a nest of vipers. You know of old that I am not to be trifled with."

"And you also know that I am not one to regard threats," was the retort. "If I were to tell my story to a magistrate, and lead the way to this spot, what would be the result to you, Methurn?"

He turned savagely toward her, and the gleam of his fierce eyes made her cower in spite of her natural hardihood. He hissed between his set teeth:

"Do you offer a temptation to me to strangle you, and throw you into yonder sarcophagus? to keep company with her you placed there? If I believed that you could denounce me, you should never leave this spot alive."

"If a struggle between us were to take place, Hugh Methurn, I should not die easy. I am younger and more active than you, and I believe that I should come off the winner; besides, I came prepared for every emergency," and she drew a sharp poignard from her bosom, the fine point of which was slightly discoloured. "The point of this steel has been dipped in a poison so subtle, so deadly, that one scratch from it will be as fatal to life as the sting of the asp. One blow from it would paralyze your arm, and in a few seconds the fatal venom would rush through your system, carrying death through every artery—through even the minutest vein. In one hour you would be a swollen and loathsome corpse; then think of the risk of such a blow dealt by a strong and desperate hand, and be more sparing of your threats, Sir Hugh."

The baronet glanced with a shudder at the weapon, then at the restless face of the speaker, and hastily said:

"Enough, Minchen. Let us not bandy threats which neither will attempt to carry out. Your life and mine are bound with the same cord, and the rope which cuts one short will be very apt to end the other. Put up your dagger; you will have no occasion to use it on me."

"I will put it up when you have descended the staircase before me. In dealing with such a man as you, one cannot be too wary."

"But how do I know that you might not strike me from behind with that infernal weapon of yours?"

"Because I have nothing to gain, and much to lose, by your death. The reverse would be the case if you could put me out of the way. Descend, Sir Hugh; you know that I would never harm you, unless compelled to do so in self-defence."

She motioned imperiously toward the opening in the floor, the poignard flashing in the light of the candle she held, and Sir Hugh thought it best to obey. He descended the steps as rapidly as his infirmities permitted, and the gipsy, after placing her candle in a

lantern that stood upon the floor, followed him, and carefully closed the trapdoor.

When she gained the floor, her companion was already at the entrance, but she rapidly overtook him, and together they shut the door which closed in the wall so perfectly, that one unacquainted with its locality would never have suspected its existence. The gipsy turned toward Sir Hugh, and said:

"For the present here we part, Methurn. Comply with my just demands, and I will wander away and leave you at peace. There lies your path, and here is mine; they diverge as widely as you could wish, and if such is your will, they need never cross each other again."

"It is my will. The annuity I have promised shall be regularly paid through my lawyer, Mr. Barstow, of Taunton, to any one you may designate; but after what has this night passed here, I never wish to see you again. We have done each other evil enough, Minchen, and it is useless to meet to call up the irredeemable past. I would bury it beneath the deepest, darkest tide of oblivion if I possessed the power to do so."

"And my son? the child you once declared the noblest boy that ever blessed a father's heart—have you no desire to look on him?"

"No," was the hasty reply. "I have no desire to see him. Since that unfortunate blow Melchoir has hated me; then why shall I pain myself by seeing him? He has grown into a handsome savage, I suppose, for he had little good from either you or me; and when my hand fell so heavily upon him, it crushed the intellect that might have guided him to a higher career than he must now fill. Poor lad!—I have often regretted the results of my passionate temper."

"The boy is good and true to me, and that is quite enough," said the gipsy, with a frown. "Had he retained his early brightness, you would probably have sought to take him from me; but now he is all my own. When I tell him that you have provided for all our wants, he will be glad to leave your land for ever, for he feels and resents the injuries of his mother. Adieu, Sir Hugh; day approaches, and we must part."

"In one month you shall have the first instalment of your annuity," was the response; and the two separated.

Sir Hugh paused for a moment to watch the receding figure of the gipsy, till the faint circle of light cast by her lantern faded into a dim spark, and was then lost in the abrupt winding of the vaults. With a sigh of relief he turned upon his own course, and slowly and thoughtfully retraced his steps towards the chapel.

The unusual excitement and his long walk had exhausted him, and he was glad, once more, to reach his own apartment, and throw himself upon his bed, where he soon fell into a profound slumber, from which he did not awake till a late hour on the following morning.

(To be continued.)

SELF-MADE;

OR,

"OUT OF THE DEPTHS."

By Mrs. E. D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH.

Author of "The Hidden Hand," "The Lost Heiress," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE CASTLE VAULT.

It was more dark and lone that vault,

Than the worst dungeon cell,

A hermit built it for his fault,

In penitence to dwell;

This den, which chilling every sense

Of feeling, hearing, sight,

Was called the Vault of Penitence,

Excluding air and light,

'Twas by an ancient prelate made

The place of burial for such dead

As having died in mortal sin

Might not be laid the church within.

'Twas next a place of punishment;

Where if so loud a shriek were sent,

As reached the upper air,

The hearers blessed themselves and said

The spirits of the sinful dead

Remoaned their torments there. Scott.

There was, opening from Lord Vincent's dressing-room, a bay-window, having a balcony on the outside, overhanging the sea. The viscount took a night telescope, opened the window and stopped out upon the balcony. He adjusted the glass and swept the coast. Nothing was to be seen but the solitary vessel that lay at anchor almost under the castle walls.

"The coast is clear," said the viscount to himself, as he re-entered the room and replaced the telescope.

Then wrapping himself in a large mantle, and, pulling a slouched hat over his eyes, he left the room, descended the stairs and went out.

He took the way down to the sands at the extreme

base of the promontory. The path that led down the side of the cliff was steep, slippery, and very dangerous, even at noonday. And this was one of the darkest hours of the night that precedes the dawn. And the path was more perilous than ever.

But the viscount was Highland-bred, and his step was as sure on the steep mountain-edge as on the level plain.

He reached the foot of the precipice in safety, and stood upon the sands, and drew from his pocket a small whistle, which he placed to his lips, and blew a shrill call.

It was answered from the vessel at anchor.

And soon a boat was put off from her side, and rowed swiftly to the shore.

"Is that you, Costo?" inquired the viscount of the man who jumped ashore.

"No, senor; it is Paolo."

"The mate?"

"Yes, senor."

"Where is Costo?"

"On board the vessel, senor."

"What have you brought this time?"

"Cuban tobacco, Jamaica spirits, and some rich West Indian fabrics for ladies' dresses. A cask of spirits and a box of cigars have gone up to the castle. Old Mr. Cuthbert took them in."

"All right; but I have some business now at hand that Cuthbert must know nothing about. For instance, he is in ignorance, and must remain in ignorance, of my visit to the beach to-night."

"We can be silent as the grave, senor."

"Have you had any trouble from the coast-guard?"

"No senor; how could we? Is not your excellency the protector of the poor?"

The viscount laughed.

"It is true," he said, "that the guards at the nearest station are in my power, and know better than to pry too closely into the concerns of any vessels that run into my castle cove; but beyond their domain I cannot protect you. So, be cautious!"

"We are cautious, senor. So cautious, that we shall sail with the first tide."

"For Havana?"

"For Havana, senor."

"Well, now I wish you to take me to the vessel. I must see the captain."

"Surely, senor," said the obsequious mate, as the viscount stepped into the boat.

"Give way, men! Back to the brigantine," said the mate.

And the men laid themselves to their oars, and soon reached the vessel's side.

Lord Vincent was received with the greatest respect by the captain, who came to the starboard gangway to meet him.

"Let us go to your cabin at once, Costo; I have business to discuss with you," said the viscount.

"Surely, senor," replied the captain, leading the way down to a small, snug cabin.

It was flanked each side by two comfortable berths, and furnished with a beaufet at one end, and a round table and two chairs in the centre.

"Will the senor deign to seat himself?" said the captain, offering one of these chairs to the visitor, and taking the other himself.

There were decanters of spirits, glasses, cigars, pipes, and tobacco on the table.

"Will the senor deign to taste this rum, which is of fine quality, and try one of these cigars, which are at once so strong and so delicate of aroma?"

For an answer the viscount poured out a liberal portion of the spirits, and quaffed it almost at a draught, and then lighted a cigar, and commenced smoking.

He smoked away for a few minutes, during which Costo waited respectfully for him to open communications.

At length the viscount spoke.

"Costo, in your island of Cuba, able-bodied men and women command good prices, do they not?"

"Yes, senor—great prices, since your illustrious statesmen have abolished the African slave-trade over all the ocean."

"For instance, how much would a fine young man of say twenty-one years of age bring?"

"From two to five thousand dollars, according to his health, good looks, and accomplishments. I have known a likely boy of fourteen years to sell for three thousand dollars! He is now one of the best coolies on the island."

"Humph! Then I should say the one I speak of would bring near the highest price you have named. How much would a healthy, handsome girl of eighteen bring?"

"From a thousand to two thousand dollars, perhaps, but if she were a quadroon she would bring more."

"And how much would a stout, healthy, strong-minded woman of fifty bring?"

"That depends upon other circumstances senor—"

If, together with her health and intelligence, she should be a good housekeeper and nurse, as women of her age are apt to be, why then she might bring from nine to twelve hundred dollars."

"Well, Costo, I have three such servants as I have just described to dispose of."

"You, senor? But you are English, and this is England!"

"Scotch—and Scotland. But no matter—it amounts to the same thing. Will you not buy my servants at a bargain?"

"Pardon, senor, but I do not understand! I thought there was no buying and selling of servants in England!"

"Of course there is not; but you might speculate a little. When such a magnificent opportunity of doing a fine stroke of business offers, you might step aside from your regular routine of trade to make a considerable sum of money—might you not?"

"If the senor would condescend to explain himself, I might understand the affair he proposes to me. I do not yet comprehend how he can have slaves to sell in England," said the captain, respectfully.

"Perhaps another would not be able to understand how you manage to import articles, upon which heavy duty is laid, free of all duty whatever?" suggested the viscount, indulging in a sneer.

"If the senor would deign to make his meaning clear!"

"Well, the less you and I say about the law, the better. So just suppose we leave law entirely out of the question."

"With all my heart, senor; if the senor desires it to be left out."

"The senor does. So now, then, we shall get along better. These three servants are at Castle Cragg. At your own estimation, the lot must be worth eight thousand dollars—sixteen hundred pounds in our money; now, you shall have them for six hundred pounds—that is, three thousand dollars of your money; and you will thereby make a clear profit of one thousand pounds, or five thousand dollars, which is nearly two hundred per cent. Come, what do you say?"

"Senor, we are to leave law out of the argument?"

"Of course."

"Then, if I had these servants on board this vessel, which is to sail with the morning tide, I would give the senor his price for them."

"You shall have them all on board within the hour."

"Good! But pardon, senor—a thought strikes me!"

"What is it?"

"Since these servants are favourite servants of the illustrious senor—"

"What then?"

"She will not consent to part with them."

"Her consent is as unnecessary as the sanction of the law. It is just because they are favourite servants—petted, pampered, and spoiled servants—that I wish to part with them. Such servants are nuisances in the family circle."

"The senor is right—always right; but shall we have any difficulty with them?"

"None whatever. You will take them in their beds."

"Will they not make an outcry, and bring the house upon us?"

"My excellent but too cautious friend, did you never hear of chloroform?"

"Surely, senor."

"It is one of the greatest blessings modern science has conferred upon us. It not only saves much pain in surgical operations; but in other operations it actually saves life. The experienced burglar, now, when he enters a house for the purpose of robbery, instead of cutting the throat of a wakeful inmate, simply administers chloroform, and soothes his restlessness so perfectly, that he falls into a happy state of insensibility, while he, the burglar, pursues his calling undisturbed and at leisure."

"Well, senor?"

"Well, don't you understand? I will conduct you and such of your men as you can trust to the castle, admit you secretly, lead you to the bedchambers of the servants, who are sure at this hour to be in a deep sleep, administer the chloroform to send them into a deeper one, and so transport them to the vessel."

"And by that time we will be ready to raise anchor and sail. And when our sleepers awake, we shall be safely on our way to Cuba."

"Exactly. But no time is to be lost. Will you go now?" inquired the viscount, rising.

"Certainly," said the captain.

And he went on deck to order the boat manned to go on shore.

In a few minutes it was reported ready, and the captain, the mate, and two sailors whom they supposed they could rely upon, entered it.

In a very few minutes they reached the shore, and left the boat.

"Leave the two sailors here with the boat. The mate will be sufficient for our purpose," said the viscount.

The captain gave the necessary directions to the boatmen.

Lord Vincent, Captain Costa, and Paolo went up the narrow pass leading to the top of the cliff, and entered the castle courtyard.

"Your boots are heavy; they might awaken the household, even at this hour of its deepest sleep. You must put them off here," whispered the viscount.

It was no sooner said than done. The men cast off both shoes and stockings, and stood in their bare feet.

"We must keep them dry to put on again," said the mate, as he stuffed the stockings into the boots.

Then, silent as death, they stole into the castle and glided along the dark deserted halls and up its staircases.

The viscount paused before the door of Mrs. Dugald's boudoir, and taking the maid's pass-key from its hiding-place, softly unlocked and entered the room, beckoning his companions in crime to follow.

Silently he stole across the room, drew aside the crimson satin hanging, exposed the oak-panelled walls, and touched a spring.

A secret door opened, revealing a narrow flight of stairs. Making a sign for his companions to follow, he descended.

Down many narrow flights of stairs, through many winding labyrinths, along many dark passages, the sailors followed their leader, until far down in the deepest foundations of the castle, they reached a large circular stone crypt, with many rusted iron doors around it, leading into little dungeons. On one side of this horrible place was a rude stone altar, with an iron crucifix. In the centre was a block. It was probably a vault which in the old and dark ages had been used for a place of secret imprisonments, executions, and burials.

Lord Vincent flashed his lantern around upon the scene and then went up to one of the grated doors, unfastened it, and entered the dungeon.

It was a small stone cavity, a hard hole, where it seemed impossible for a human being to live and breathe for an hour. And yet poor Katy, with wonderful tenacity of life had clung to existence there ever since the hour when, seeming dead, she had been dragged from the apartments of Faustina to this deep and hideous vault.

So you see he had deceived Faustina into the belief that Katy had died in the vault from the effects of chloroform.

By the dim light of the lantern, her form could now be seen sitting in the corner of the dungeon. Her knees were drawn up, her arms folded on them, and her head buried in them. She had fallen asleep; probably after long watching and fasting and the effects of mental and physical exhaustion. The entrance of the viscount did not awaken her.

"This is the woman; I was obliged to confine her here for a violent assault upon a lady of my family. She is fast asleep; but to attempt to move her might awaken her; so we will make all sure by sending her into a deeper sleep," whispered the viscount, drawing from his pocket first a bottle of chloroform and then a piece of sponge, which he proceeded to saturate with the liquid.

But it required tact to apply it. Katy's face was buried in her arms. So he first put the lantern out of the way where it could not shine upon her, and then went and gently lifted Katy's head with one hand, while he approached the sponge near her nose with the other.

"Yes, child; I think so too—My ladyship—Whited saltpetre—" muttered Katy, who was dreaming, probably, of her lady and her lady's dangers.

The viscount hid her head back on his own breast, put the chloroform-sponge to her nose, and fitted his own slouch hat over her face in such a manner as to confine the fumes.

Poor old Katy soon inhaled the deadly vapour, which acted with unusual power upon her exhausted frame, so that she speedily lay as one dead.

"Take her up! make haste! There is a shorter way out of this vault; but I could not bring you here by it because it is fastened on this side," said the viscount, leaving the den.

The captain and mate went in, and raised old Katy's unresisting form in their arms, and followed the viscount, who led them from the vault into a long stone passage, at the end of which was a door, fastened on the inside with a chain and padlock.

The Viscount unlocked this door, which opened out into a rocky cave, through which they passed to an intricate, winding and rugged labyrinth, which finally led out into the open air, on the beach near which the boat was left.

The captain and mate laid down their burden, and stretched their limbs, and took a long breath.

The viscount beckoned the boatmen to approach. And they came.

Then turning to the captain, he said:

"You had better order these men to take this woman immediately to the boat, and carry her across to the vessel, and look her up in some place of safety. Then they can return for us; and in the meantime we will return to the castle for the other two."

"Yes, senor," said the captain; and he promptly gave the order.

The viscount waited until he saw Katy safely in the boat and half across on her way to the vessel, and then he beckoned his companions to follow him, and led the way back to the castle.

This time he conducted them to an old turret, that had been appointed to the use of Lady Vincent's servants; it was remote from the sleeping apartments of the other domestics. The old locks were without keys.

"We will take the man first," said Lord Vincent, softly opening an old oaken door, and leading them into a small circular room, scantily furnished, where, upon a rude bedstead, lay poor Jim in a profound sleep. He was a fine subject for their villainous practices. He was lying on his back, with his head stretched back over his pillow, his eyes fast closed, and his mouth wide open. One touching incident in the appearance of this poor fellow was the presence of two large tears on his cheeks. He had probably laid awake all night, and just cried himself to sleep over the fate of the mother whom his loyal heart loved so faithfully.

The viscount applied the chloroform and Jim's sleep sank into insensibility.

The captain and the mate then raised him in their arms and bore him from the room and through the many passages and down the many stairs, and along the great hall to the outside of the castle.

They had a hard time getting him down the cliff. But they accomplished the task at last. They found the boat returned and the boatmen waiting impatiently for their arrival.

"Captain, the tide serves!" said one of these men.

"I know it, Jacques. We will sail in half-an-hour. Where did you put the woman?"

"I locked her in your cabin for the present, captain."

"Did she recover her senses?"

"No, captain!"

"The devil! I hope she won't die!"

"No danger, Costo! they lie insensible under the influence of chloroform, sometimes for hours, and then recover in a better condition than they were before," said the viscount, hazarding an opinion on a subject of which he knew very little. "But, now, order the sailors to convey this man to the vessel and then return once more for us."

"Pardon, senor! We had better bind him first. If he should recover before he reaches the vessel he might jump out and make his escape," replied the captain, drawing a large silk handkerchief from his pocket and tying the hands of the captive firmly behind his back.

"Lend me yours, Paolo," he next requested, holding his hand out for the required article.

With this second handkerchief twisted into a rope, the captain firmly tied together the feet of his captive.

Jim was now as effectually bound as if his fetters had been iron or rope; but he was beginning to show signs of recovery.

The viscount saw this and applied the chloroform again, and Jim relapsed into insensibility.

In this condition he was conveyed into the boat and rowed swiftly to the vessel.

Meanwhile Lord Vincent and his confederates in crime retraced their steps up the cliff.

"We must be very quick this time, for the household will soon be astir," whispered Lord Vincent, eagerly, as he noticed on the eastern horizon the faint dawn of the late winter morning.

They entered the castle, which, luckily for them, was still buried in repose, and wound their circuitous way back to the turret where the last victim, poor Sally, lay.

The viscount opened the oaken door and preceded his companions into her chamber.

But, oh, horror! Sally was awake and up! She was seated on the side of her bed, and in the act of putting on her shoes.

On seeing the viscount enter she raised her eyes and gazed in dumb amazement.

He lost no time. Like a wild beast he sprang upon her before she could utter a cry.

Throwing one arm around her throat, with his hand upon her mouth, he forced her head back against her breast, and applied the chloroform, until she succumbed to its fatal power, and sank like a corpse in his arms.

Then his two accomplices took her, and by the

same winding route of halls, stairs and passages, carried her out of the castle and down to the beach, where the boat was waiting to receive her.

They put her into it, and the viscount, the captain and the mate followed.

In three minutes they reached the vessel, and all went on board, taking the captive girl with them.

The viscount accompanied the captain to his little office and received the six hundred pounds in gold which was the price of this last villany.

Then the accomplices shook hands and parted.

The sailors rowed the viscount back to the shore, and then returned to their vessel.

The viscount stood on the beach, watching the brigantine until she raised her anchor and made sail.

And then, as it was growing light, he turned and climbed the cliff and entered the castle, wearing a smile of triumph.

(To be continued.)

SCIENCE.

WE perceive, by the first report of the Brighton West Pier Company, that "the contract for the erection of the pier has been let to Messrs. Laidlaw and Sons, of Glasgow, for the sum of £21,890."

METALLIC FLAGS.—Mr. A. Watson has recently introduced a new metallic flag, which is highly spoken of by those who have seen it. The inventor says:—"These flags are more beautiful than bunting, or even silk; and as they cannot be injured by the most violent storms of wind, rain, snow, or sleet, they will in the long run be twenty times cheaper than bunting. They will answer the double purpose of a flag and a vane, and may be used as a sign. They are always thrown to the breeze, wind or no wind, and are literally nailed to the mast."

ATMOSPHERIC PRESSURE AS A REMEDIAL AGENT.—At a scientific meeting in Paris, a singular paper was lately read by Dr. Foley, in which the writer recommends a high atmospheric pressure as a cure for various diseases. This can be done by constructing a small chamber communicating with a forcing-pump, and provided with an air-gauge and safety-valve. By this treatment catarrh, asthma, and complaints of the respiratory organs, it is said, may be removed; and in disorders arising from weakness, compressed air will arterialize the blood, and increase the vital power of the patient.

IRON-CLADS.—The Admiralty have decided this year to try the experiment of building vessels plated with 4½-inch iron, but of small tonnage. The Research, of 1,250 tons, coated from end to end with Warrior plates, has proved a great success, draws only 14 feet of water, steams 10½ knots, and fought successfully against a gale which drove a wooden sloop of similar size into harbour. Ten iron-clads have been ordered, the largest of which will be of 4,246 tons, and the smallest only 990. One of these, the Bellerophon, to be finished in twelve months, is to be plated with 10 inches of teak and 6 inches of iron, and to be fitted with ten 300-pounder and two 600-pounder guns. Another steamer, the Pallas, is being built for speed, and intended to carry sixteen days' coal at fourteen miles an hour.

THE FATALITY OF FROST.

WE have hinted at the fact that excessive winter mortality does not occasion the same shock that excessive summer mortality causes. This is certainly the case. It would scarcely be overstating the truth to say that five deaths from genuine cholera in any week would have created more alarm than the 509 deaths from cold. Though some explanation of this fact is possible, it is still unreasonable. The old and the young and these of impaired constitution are the chief victims of cold; but so they are of cholera. Deaths from cholera are a little more rapid than those from cold, but only a little more so. We have seen how rapidly cold tells—how quickly as the thermometer goes down the mortality goes up, so that in London alone in a short time it sprang from 1,291 to 1,798. Cholera affects primarily the abdomen; cold affects the chest. But there is little in this difference to make it wise in us to think lightly of the latter, as few situations are more distressing than that of those who suffer from want of breath, which is the ultimate effect of cold.

We aimed at setting forth the evil power of cold—to speak more accurately, of want of heat. In the strange mutual dependence of organic and inorganic nature, want of heat comes to mean want of air, the extinction of life, and the reduction of our fine organization to its original inorganic elements. Van Swieten has said something to the effect that an ounce of blood on the brain is enough to obliterate our humanity. The same may be said, in regard to many people, of a few degrees' fall in the thermometer. We need say no

more to show the wisdom of a proper fear of cold. In the event of more frost, let those who have strong bodies use them actively. This is the best way of resisting cold. Let those who are weakly be kept warm. Let charity take the thermometer in hand and, as it falls, do its best, by a liberal diffusion of blankets and spare clothes, of soups and coals, to husband and increase the scanty heat of the poor, and, so doing, it will preserve their life and secure their blessing.

Since writing the above, we have learned from the return of the Registrar-General that in the week ending January 16th no less than 2,427 persons died, that is, 877 in excess of the average number. Though the frost itself had ceased, its effects continued. Fuller particulars will be found in the return. We will only direct attention to one or two points. The mortality from typhus has risen since the frost, so has that from measles. Generally speaking, the epidemic mortality has increased. As to the question of age, 800 of the 2,427 were between twenty and sixty years of age. Indeed, it would be roughly correct to say that of the 2,400 deaths 800 occurred in early life, 800 in middle life, and 800 in advanced life. Of course these figures show a much larger proportionate mortality in the advanced than in the middle life; nevertheless, the death of 800 middle-aged persons is enough to show the wisdom of even this class taking reasonable measures against the action of extreme cold whenever it occurs. The rapid and remarkable rise in the mortality effected by the frost has suggested to the Registrar the idea of violence which we have expressed above. Alluding to the 877 excessive deaths, he says: "These persons were killed almost suddenly by the cold wave of the atmosphere."

MANUFACTURE OF GLASS.—This invention consists in the employment for what is termed the finishing of glassware, of a furnace and pots of the same kind as are used in the melting process, whereby goods are produced having a brighter and cleaner surface than goods finished by the use of any other kind of furnace, as the glass while being finished is not exposed to the fumes of sulphur or to smoke, dust, or any other deleterious agency. It also consists in providing in the outer shell of a glass furnace, a system of air-flues which are open at the top and the bottom on the exterior of the shell or cone, the lower opening being arranged at a suitable distance from the floor of the glass-house for the reception of the heated and impure air, and the upper ones for the discharge of such air above the roof of the house, and the said flues serving both for the ventilation and cooling of the house, and for the reduction of the excessive heat of the shell of the furnace.

PHOTOGRAPHY.

"In 1839, two men of genius, Nicéphore Niepce and Daguerre, endowed France with one of the most beautiful discoveries of modern times, the object of which was the fixing upon a silvered plate the pictures produced by the luminous rays in the camera. The operation had, however, to be repeated every time a new proof was required."

"Some years later, Mr. Talbot substituted paper for the metallic plate, and by various chemical processes, obtained, instead of the single Daguerrean picture, a negative proof, from which an infinite number of other proofs, positives, could be obtained, thus multiplying its attainment."

"The improvements made almost daily in this new art admit of our now obtaining permanent pictures; nevertheless, it too frequently happens that many pictures obtained and fixed under identical conditions, do not exhibit the same conditions of durability, hence it happens that some of them, after a varying lapse of time, either become spotted, stained, or fading, lose their primitive vigour."

"In order to avoid this inconvenience, every intelligent photographer has, for many years past, sought for the means of rendering photographic pictures really permanent, and some photographic illustrations, have, by various processes, attained to results that are almost perfect."

"It is one among these results that I submit to the public: in a word, photographic engraving is discovered."

"By Messrs. Girard and Co.'s processes we can, by means of this new discovery, obtain a picture from a glass negative engraved on copper, in twenty-four hours, which permits of many hundred copies being printed in a few hours."

"This immense progress is the climax of photography: it opens a new era to it, permitting its co-operation in the illustration of all our arts and manufactures, not only by its scrupulous fidelity of representation, but also by its incredible rapidity."

"The following examples may be taken among a thousand others:—Take for instance, an engraving by one of our best artists, measuring, say 10, 15, or 20 inches square, which has cost the engraver two, five, or perhaps even ten years of assiduous labour to produce the plate. In four-and-twenty hours, Girard and

Co. can, if required, produce a *fac-simile* plate, or a reduced one, that shall yield unexceptionable proofs. Again, take a collection of bronzes, sculptures, goldsmiths' work, jewellery, shawls, lace embroideries, cameos, medals, and any similar work of art."

"Think how much time it would take for the hand of man to produce, on a steel plate, a representation of all those marvels of art, and especially, how much talent it requires to produce them faithfully."

"In four-and-twenty hours a copper or steel plate may be 'drawn and engraved' with a delicacy and accuracy truly marvellous."

"Hitherto, in consequence of various impediments, photography has not been much employed to illustrate pointed books. This difficulty is now overcome by photographic engraving; the plates required to illustrate the text of a book may be obtained in a few days, without destroying the artist's original drawing."

"Finally, photographic engraving is applicable to every subject—to works of art and manufactures; it can reduce the maps and plans necessary for the army, copy and multiply the treasures of our museums, our picture galleries, laboratories, factories, workshops, arsenals, navy yards, &c. &c.; or copy a picture by one of our first painters, and in a few days diffuse an engraving of it throughout the world."

"I have been so fortunate as to receive from the proprietors of this process an offer of a share in it; they applied to me because they knew I would not shrink from any difficulty when photographic progress is in question. A special agreement constitutes me a partner in the working of the process. It is in this capacity that I have felt it my duty to communicate to you the complete realization of this immense work, sought for and waited for during many long years."

NAIL MACHINE.—This invention relates to machinery for the manufacture of forged nails, more especially horse-shoe nails. In the manufacture of such nails by machinery it is difficult to produce as thin or fine a point as is desirable by a hammering or drawing operation. The plan adopted in this invention is to cut the points, after having reduced the nail as much as desirable by hammering or drawing. The improvement consists in the employment, in a machine for making forged nails, of cutters so constructed and applied that they will serve the purpose of cutting the metal from the side of the nail to reduce the thickness and produce the desired form of the point. It also consists in the employment, in combination with such cutters, of a moving finger or presser, so arranged in combination with a fixed guide as to press the nail against such guide and hold it in contact therewith, and in proper position during the operation of cutting the point, and so to act upon the point before or during the cutting operation as to bring it into line with the centre of the nail when the cutting is completed.

WOOD SAWING AND SHAPING MACHINES.—An invention has been patented by Mr. J. W. McCarter, of Londonderry. It comprises improvements applicable to machinery for sawing wood and more or less to other wood-cutting machinery. Deal frames upon his plan are sawing thirty-two deals per hour, two being cut at the same time. The invention does not relate to the saws with their frames and guides. The first portion of the invention relates to an improved silent feed motion, the principal part of which is a disc fixed on a shaft driving the feed roller shafts. A second portion of the invention relates to improved rollers for carrying, moving, and guiding the wood through the machine, these rollers being so contrived as to dispense with the fence, side rollers, weights, and springs hitherto employed. Another invention, by Henry Wilson, of London, is described as consisting in the construction of machinery whereby wood is shaped, either one piece or several pieces at one time, to the form of a metal or other suitable hard template or guide, by means of rotating cutters, which act upon the wood in the direction of the grain, whereby a smooth and even surface is obtained.

REVOLVING FIRE-ARM.—In revolving cylinder fire-arms which load at the rear of the cylinder there have been many different constructions of the frame and modes of applying the cylinder to provide for loading. One mode of applying the cylinder, which admits of a very simple construction of the arm, is to attach its axis-pin to a swinging support, which permits the cylinder to swing outward from the other parts of the arm in a lateral direction; but as the said pin has only been attached at one end to such support the attachment has not been sufficiently firm and durable. The object of the first part of this invention is to afford a better support for a so-called cylinder and its more durable attachment: and to this end it consists in the employment, within the main frame of the arm, of a laterally swinging frame, constructed to support both ends of the axis-pin, and to fit within

recesses in the main frame. The second part of the invention consists in a novel mode of applying a plunger in combination with a cylinder having such a swinging movement for the purpose of expelling the discharged cartridge-shells from the chambers and cleaning them, whereby, while remaining attached to the arm, the said plunger is permitted to have the necessary movements for the purpose, and when not in use is permitted to lie close under the stationary barrel, out of the way.

CURE FOR LOCKJAW.—At the last sitting of the Academy of Sciences, M. Matteucci wrote to describe a case of lockjaw, in which the patient was subjected to the action of a voltaic column of 30 to 40 couples. Under the influence of the electric currents, the tetanic shocks diminished in intensity, and the patient could open and shut his mouth; but the relief was only temporary, and the contractions returned, in spite of the action of the current, which was then discontinued for a short time, and resumed with a pile of about 60 elements. Again an improvement became manifest, and these alternations of relief and relapse continued for several hours, but the beneficial effects of the current gradually diminished, until they ceased altogether. M. Farini, who practised medicine at the time this experiment was made (1838), and who has since become celebrated as a statesman, told M. Matteucci that the disorder was occasioned by the existence of extraneous bodies in the patient's leg. M. Matteucci concludes with remarking that, since electricity produces relief in lockjaw, which is almost the only result to be hoped for, the attention of practitioners should be called to it.

FACETIE.

THE LATEST "CHANGE OF NAME."—The "Bard of Avon" to be called *Shakespeareless*.—*Fun.*

RATHER TOO KNOWING.—Mrs. Partington, when she heard the minister say there would be a nave in the new church, observed that "she knew very well who the party was."

MOCK TURTLE.—The person who attempted to raise coals from horse-chestnuts went into the market the other day and inquired for a mock-turtle to make "mock-turtle soup" of.

NOR UNCOMMON.—"Jemmy," said a sympathizing friend to a man who was just too late for the train, "you did not run fast enough." "Yes, I did," said Jemmy, "I ran fast enough, but I did not start soon enough."

IL N'Y A PLUS D'ENFANTS.

Teacher: On your knees, this instant, and apologize for your insolence.

Boy: Never! A man should never kneel but to Heaven, and his sweetheart.

TRUE.—When one man is as "Bitter as a Serpent" against another, he generally partakes less of the *Adler* than of the *Destructor*.—*Fun.*

"I'd have you to know, madam, that my uncle was a barrister of the law." "A fig for your barrister!" retorted Mrs. Smith, turning up her nose. "Haven't I a cousin as is a coridor in the navy?"

HOW THE LAWYER CONCEALED HIS FEELINGS.—A judge in Indiana threatened to fine a lawyer for contempt of court. "I have expressed no contempt for the court," said the lawyer, "on the contrary, I have concealed my feelings."

LIKE HER FATHER.

Stern Parent: I wish you to bear in mind, miss, that this is the last party I give! This is the fifth winter I have given an expensive ball, in order to get you off my hands—and yet there is nobody fool enough to take you! Nobody good enough for you! Pray who are you, that—

Daughter: I am your own child! and very much like you, they say!

ENGAGING A SERVANT.—When Reuben stood before him, quick as light, Sir George turned and looked at Erne for one second, and then looked at Reuben again. Steadily gazing at him, he pointed the handle of his riding-whip towards him, and said: "Look here, sirrah, do you hear? You are to have fifteen shillings a week, and are to put three half-crowns in the savings-bank. You are to get up at seven, say your prayers, to clean the boots, and offer to help the gardener. If he is fool enough to accept your offer, you may tell him that you weren't hired to work in the garden. If Mr. Erne bathes, you are to row round and round him in a boat, and try to prevent his drowning himself. If he does, you are to send a servant to me, informing me of the fact, and go for the drags. If such a casualty should occur, you are to consider your engagement as terminated that day week. I object to skittles, to potting at public-houses, and to running along the towing-path like a lunatic, bellowing at the idiots that row boat-races. Any conversa-

tion with my son Erne on the subject of pigeon-shooting, pedestrianism, bagatelle, all-fours, toy-terriers, or Nonconformist doctrines, will lead to your immediate dismissal. Do you understand?"—"The *Hillars* and the *Burtens*."

NATURAL AND ARTIFICIAL LIGHTS.—A Liverpool paper tells of a hall that was lighted with the smiles of fair women and kerosene lamps.

UNKIND.—A moon-struck wooer presented a rose to a lady, accompanied with the following lines:—

Accept, dear maid, this beauteous rose,
To deck thy breast most fair;
Observe its hue, nor wonder why
It blushes to be there!

ANSWER.

I will accept thy beauteous rose,
And on my breast enslave it;
But should it blush, I should suppose
'Tis for the one who gave it!

A TEA-TABLE CONUNDRUM.—What must you do to a tea-table to make it fit to eat? Give it up? Why, take away the (T) it becomes eat-able.

A SLIGHT DIFFERENCE.—An auctioneer put up Drew's "Essay on Souls" for sale, which was bid off by a shoemaker, who gravely asked if he had "any more articles on shoemaking to sell?"

NEW FACT IN ELECTRIC SCIENCE.—Medical men state (and, curiously enough, it also stands to reason) that a certain amount of electricity is conveyed to the system by the receipt of a telegraphic message. The words which have run along the wire convey the fluid to the clerk, who transmits it to the paper which you receive. It is, the doctors say, a very healthy thing to take a course of telegrams, and their efficacy is increased by the shock which it gives most people to receive a telegram at all. We had not looked at the matter in this light, but shall immediately begin curing all our sick friends by incessant transmissions of electrifying jokes.—*Punch.*

THE TAILOR AT NIAGARA.

To view Niagara's falls one day,
A Priest and Tailor took their way,
The Parson cried, while wrapped in wonder,
And listening to the cataract's thunder,
"Lord, how thy works amaze our eyes,
And fill our heart with vast surprise!"
The Tailor merely made this note,
"Lord! what a place to sponge a coat!"

LOOKING WITH THE EYES SHUT.—"Never be critical upon the ladies," was the maxim of an old Irish peer, remarkable for his homage to the sex; "the only way in the world that a true gentleman will attempt to look at the faults of a pretty woman is to shut his eyes."

KNOWING THE partiality of Prussians for sleeping under feather-beds the Danes have determined, in the event of a suit from these unwelcome strangers, to be down upon them, and, if they come to their river beds, to give them an *Eider* quilting.—*Fun.*

HONOUR AMONG THIEVES.—A gentleman went with a friend to the opera, and arrived before the doors were open. While waiting in the crowd, standing behind his friend, he amused himself by picking the pocket of the latter, abstracting therefrom a handkerchief. Hardly had he done so, when he was tapped on the shoulder, and on turning around he saw a gentlemanly-looking individual, who handed him his own snuff-box with a polite bow, observing that he never knowingly "operated on a brother professional, and was sorry that he had made a mistake."

AN APOLOGY TO SHAKESPEARE.

Apologies of all the Blundering of the "National Committee."
Forgive, blest Shade, the tributary sneer
With which this trading on thy fame we hiss;
Nor think we less thy honoured name reverse,
Because we shrink from snobishness like this!
Punch.

PAYING PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO IT.—"Pat," said the captain of a ship to an Irishman, who was a passenger on board, and who sometimes used to sleep twenty hours in succession, "how do you contrive to sleep so long?" "How?" cried Pat, "why I pay particular attention to it."

SHAPE OF THE EARTH.—A country schoolmaster one day announced to his pupils that the examination would soon take place. "If you are examined in geography," he said, "you will surely be asked what shape the world is, and if you should not remember, just look at me, and I will show my snuff-box, to remind you it is round." Unfortunately, the school-master had two snuff-boxes—a round one, which he carried on Sunday, and a square, that he carried during the week. The fatal day having arrived, the class in geography was duly called out, and the question asked: "What is the shape of the earth?" The first boy, appalled by the appearance of the examining com-

mittee, felt embarrassed, and glanced at the master, who at once pointed to his snuff-box. "Sir," boldly answered the boy, "it is round on Sunday and square all the rest of the week."

SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN.—There can never be Peace as long as there is a General Wrangel.—*Punch.*

TWO SIDES TO THE QUESTION.—"Bob," said a young fellow to his companion at a fancy fair, "you are missing all the sights on this side."—"Never mind, Bill," retorted Bob, "I'm sighting all the misses on the other."

HANDSOMELY REWARDED.—A Paris letter relates that a poor little milliner found an English nobleman's pocket-book, with 50,000 francs. She restored it intact, and he rewarded her by promising to speak well of her shop.

A LITTLE SLIPPERY.—"What! are you drunk again?" "No, my dear, not drunk, but a little slippery. The fact is, my dear, some scoundrel has been rubbing my boots till they are as smooth as a pane of glass."

HOW TO STOP HIS GRUMBLING.

Mrs. LaMode: You really ought to hear my husband scold about your large bills!

Dreamer: Well, he must have a heart of stone! With a wife of such elegance, and the finest figure I ever fitted—and you have only three or four dresses made a month, as my bills will prove. If you have a fault, it is too much economy. Send him to me, and I'll show him Mrs. Shoddy's bill, that'll stop his grumbings.

HINTS TO CHAIRMEN.—The following are a few useful questions to be put to the witnesses in railway cases by any chairman of a committee:—Is a Trunk line only intended for luggage? In the London, Chatham and Dover Extension will the *Main Line* be over the *Sea*?—*Punch.*

SUITABLE.—We are told that M. Bardon has manufactured paper of first-rate quality from wood, which will save eighty per cent. It will exactly suit the wooden style of certain writers we could mention.

CORRECT TIME.—There is an Irishman employed as a porter on the Great Eastern Railway, who brags of having a watch that keeps correct time. He was heard to remark a few mornings since, upon pulling out his watch, "If the sun ain't over that hill in a minnit and a half, he will be late."

SELF-DENIAL.

Ned.—So you won't go to the Opera to-night?

Harry.—No; I've had to come the religious dodge over the governor; he said he wouldn't give me another penny. The fact is, Ned, I did go it a little too fast, and got so much in debt, that I must make a sacrifice and remain quiet for a month, when dad will fork over again!

A ROYAL REPARTEE.—Queen Elizabeth once paid a visit to Folkestone, then called Folkensteine, when the poetical mayor, being a very short man, stood on a stool, and, as the queen passed by, said—

"Most gracious and most noble queen,
Thou art right welcome to Folkensteine."

The queen, being struck with his comical appearance, replied—

"Thou old fool,
Get off that stool."

SAILING EXTRAORDINARY.—A learned judge recently remarked that a whole fleet might be sailed through the Act which concerns the exporting of war vessels to a foreign power. We quoted the observation at the time, as it did not travel from the court into the public prints. Mr. Milner Gibson has, we are plagiarised it, read it backwards, and turned it against the lawyers by declaring that he could sail a fleet through the interpretation of any of the lawyers. We are quite certain the Lord Chancellor, who is nautical, is as good an admiral as Mr. Milner Gibson, who is also a "salt" in the amateur way.

THE JOKER DEFEATED.—Amongst the company that frequented Carlton-house was a certain old Admiral P., whom the Prince was fond of inviting, though he did not possess a single agreeable quality, or any one convivial gift, except a great power of drinking the very strongest port without its producing the slightest show of effect upon him. One night Brummel, evidently bent on testing the old sailor's head, seated himself next him, making it his business to pass the decanters as briskly as he could. The admiral asked nothing better; filled and drank bumper. Not content with this legitimate test, Brummel watched his opportunity when the admiral's head was turned, and filled his glass up to the brim. Four or five times was the trick repeated, and with success, when at last the admiral, turning quickly round, caught him in the very act, with the decanter still in his hand. Fixing his eyes upon him

with the fierceness of a tiger, the old man said, "Drink it, sir—drink it!" and so terrified was Brummel by the manner and the look that he raised the glass to his lips and drained it, while all at the table were convulsed with laughter.

AN AWKWARD SHOT.—Calliston, a young tailor, residing in Mullabawn, county Armagh, fell in love with a carpenter's daughter. Incredible as it may seem, he has been known to sit perched in a tree all night, convenient to her house, that he might catch a glimpse of her when she made her appearance at early dawn. The girl, however, avoided him. Determined to attract her attention, he went to church with a pistol, loaded only with powder, and, at a certain part of the service, he inclined the muzzle to his body, and discharged the pistol, the only fatality attending which was the alarm it gave the congregation, for, being merely charged with powder, the hero dwindled down to a bannikin. He was arrested, and sent to gaol for two months.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

SKELETON LEAVES.—These are very pretty for scrap-books, &c. To procure them, mix a dessert-spoonful of chloride of lime with a pint of water. Soak the leaves in the mixture for about four hours; then remove and wash in water, after which allow to dry, and gum in the scrap-book or elsewhere. Large tough leaves will sometimes require more than four hours' soaking.

DIPHTHERIA.—The following recipe for the cure of diphtheria is strongly recommended by a physician, who says that of one thousand cases in which it has been used not a single patient has been lost. The treatment consists in thoroughly swabbing the back of the mouth and throat with a wash made thus:—Table salt, two drachms; black pepper, golden seal, nitrate of potash, alum, one drachm each. Mix and pulverize, put into a teacup, which half fill with boiling water, stir well, and then fill up with good vinegar. Use every half-hour, one, two, and four hours, as recovery progresses. The patient may swallow a little each time. Apply one ounce each of spirits of turpentine, sweet oil and aqua ammonia, mixed, every four hours to the whole of the throat and to the breast-bone, keeping fannel to the part.

STATISTICS.

RAILWAYS.—The amount expended in this country on railways to the present time has been upwards of three hundred and eighty-five millions sterling, or nearly half the National Debt. This amount has been devoted to the construction of eleven thousand five hundred miles of railway in the British Islands, which are now open for traffic.

DURING the last ten years the agricultural population of England has fallen off as follows:—the number of farmers and graziers has decreased from 306,767 to 249,275, or about 20 per cent.; of farmers' wives, from 201,735 to 163,735; of their sons and daughters, from 273,179 to 176,161; of landholders, from 84,627 to 30,766; of indoor male farm-labourers, from 235,943 to 158,411; of ditto female, from 128,251 to 46,561; of outdoor labourers, 1,027,877 to 958,270.

SCHOOLS IN AMERICA.—Information of a very interesting character is contained in Governor Seymour's late message. During the year 1863, the total amount expended for common schools was \$3,854,900 dollars; the total number of children attending during the year was 887,570 out of 1,356,900 persons between the ages of four and twenty-one years. The number of teachers employed is 26,213, in 11,749 school-houses; and there are 1,175,335 volumes in the District Libraries.

TRADE AND NAVIGATION.—The annual statement of the trade and navigation of the United Kingdom with foreign and British possessions for the year 1862 has just been issued. The total of the real value of merchandise exported amounted to £166,168,124, and the total of merchandise imported was £225,716,976. The exports show an increase of six and a half millions over that of the year 1861, and the imports an increase of eight and a quarter millions. In the year 1858 the exports were £189,782,779, and the imports £164,583,832.

LORD ELGIN'S TOMB.—Mr. Burne at present has gone to Dhurruksala to complete the monument there being erected over the last resting-place of the late Lord Elgin. The work of finishing the tomb is being hurried on, as rumour says that the late Viceroy earnestly requested his widow not to leave the shores of India till it was fully completed. It is now well known that the design for this monument was chosen by Lord Elgin himself during his dying hours from

designs drawn at his own request by Mr. Gordon, civil engineer, of Umritsur. It is wonderful how clear Lord Elgin's mind appears to have been during those few melancholy and solemn days, when all around his bed were expecting hourly his demise. After the first stroke he entirely recovered consciousness, and dictated a highly important letter to Sir Charles Wood. Lord Elgin's letter to Sir Charles Wood was most clear and plain, the language being as choice, and the periods as well turned, as though he were in perfect health.

THE WHEREWITHAL.

A MAN may have wisdom and worth,
And humour and wit at his call;
But what do these matter on earth
If he has not the wherewithal?
His home may be circled with friends,
If he only can keep up the ball;
But friendship soon changes and ends
If he has not the wherewithal.
Then seek for the wherewithal—
Make sure of the wherewithal,
For pleasure, like friendship, soon ends
If you have not the wherewithal.
The purse is the dial whose face
Shows best where the sunlight doth fall;
He always is first in the race,
Who is first with the wherewithal!
Some say that the high can be mean—
Some hint that the great can be small;
But trifles like these are not seen,
If blessed with the wherewithal!
Then seek for the wherewithal—
Make sure of the wherewithal,
For pleasure, like friendship, soon ends,
If short of the wherewithal.
Love smiles on the casement that shows
A picture *within* to enthral;
When *gold's* in the heart of the rose,
There's *love* in the wherewithal!
Yes; men may have wisdom and worth,
And humour and wit at their call,
But what do these matter on earth
If they have not the wherewithal?
Then seek for the wherewithal—
Make sure of the wherewithal,
For pleasure, like friendship, soon ends,
If short of the wherewithal!

C. S.

GEMS

BEAUTY AND VIRTUE.—Beauty is no longer amiable than while virtue adorns it.

How many men of extraordinary talents and merits have died unknown! How many there are who still, at this time, live unknown, and who never will be taken notice of! Nature produces merit, virtue carries it to perfection, and fortune gives it the power of acting.

The following, upon vulgar natures, is admirably true, and does not include a line that could be well spared:

Tender-handed, stroke a nettle,
And it stings you for your pains;
Grasp it like a man of mettle,
And it soft as silk remains.
'Tis the same with vulgar natures;
Use them kindly, they rebel;
Be as rough as nutmeg-graters,
And the rogues obey you well.

OLD AGE.—A healthy old man, who is not foolish, is the happiest creature living. It is at that time of life only that he enjoys his faculties with satisfaction. It is then he has nothing to manage, as the phrase is. He speaks the honest truth, and whether the rest of the world will give him the privilege or not, he has so little to ask of them, that he can take it.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE letters of Napoleon I., which were not published for certain reasons in Paris, will, we hear, be shortly issued in London.

AN ACT OF SELF-DENIAL.—At a public ball given by the wife of the Prefect of the Seine, at which 3,000 persons were present, no crinoline was worn!

MATERIALS FOR AN EXPLOSION.—A person writes to the *Hants Advertiser* to say that there are 80,000 barrels of gunpowder stowed away in Marchwood magazines, about a mile from Southampton.

PRUSSIAN FINANCES.—A Berlin correspondent states that the Prussian Government has, for the present, plenty of money, the revenue exceeding the expenditure, and there being an available reserve of some

£6,750,000, a very large sum for Prussia. Even when that is expended, the king could borrow on the strength of a compromise to be ultimately effected with his people, and on the security of the Crown lands, believed to be worth much more than two millions sterling.

TOM KING IN LUCK.—Joe Coburn, a New York pugilist, challenges Tom King to come to America, and fight for 5,000 dollars a side, Tom to have 1,000 dollars to pay his expenses across.

CAMPHOR.—The greater part of the camphor that comes to Europe and America is from Japan and China. It grows abundantly, however, in Borneo and Sumatra.

NAVY REFORM IN PRUSSIA.—The Prussian navy is about to be clad English fashion, and the same rules followed with regard to the purchase of clothes by the common seaman.

THE NOVA SCOTIAN GOLD FIELDS.—According to the *Halifax Colonist*, the Nova Scotian gold mines yielded last quarter 4,620 oz. of gold. About 1,000 men were engaged on them.

AN EGYPTIAN MANUSCRIPT.—The Prince of Wales has printed, for private circulation, a copy of a Papyrus which was discovered during his late visit to Thebes. This Egyptian document is older than the time of Pericles, yet it belongs to a period marked by the decline of Pharaonic art.

ROYAL VISIT TO PARKHURST.—Her Majesty visited Parkhurst Prison, the other week, and afterwards sent some toys to the children of the convicts.

THE PRINCE OF PRUSSIA AND THE WAR.—The Prince of Prussia has gone to Denmark with the Prussian army, though he will not take any active command during the war.

THE GODWIN SANDS.—The hope of recovering Godwin Sands has not grown faint, and a public enterprise is still spoken of as contemplating the object. If ever accomplished, it will, for a time, not be a favourite resort for nervous persons who want lodgings at the sea-side, and certainly might feel timid when the winds roar.

THE LATE MAHARAJE.—The Maharajah Duleep Singh, before quitting England for Madras, caused the body of his late mother to be removed from its temporary resting-place at Kensal Green, and transported for due funeral rites to the land of the Maharajah's faith and birth.

BAROMETER READINGS.—USEFUL RULES.

As a help to those who are not yet versed in the science of weather, Messrs. Negretti and Zambra's few short rules may serve as guides until the public are more advanced in this interesting and useful study:—

A RISING BAROMETER.

A "rapid" rise indicates unsettled weather.
A "gradual" rise indicates settled weather.
A "rise" with dry air and cold increasing in summer indicates wind from northward; and if rain has fallen better weather is to be expected.
A "rise" with moist air and a low temperature indicates wind and rain from northward.
A "rise" with southerly wind indicates fine weather.

A STEADY BAROMETER.

With dry air and a seasonable temperature indicates a continuance of very fine weather.

A FALLING BAROMETER.

A "rapid" fall indicates stormy weather.
A "rapid" fall with westerly wind indicates stormy weather from northward.
A "fall" with a northerly wind indicates storm, with rain and hail in summer and snow in winter.
A "fall" with increased moisture in the air and the heat increasing indicates wind and rain from southward.
A "fall" with dry air and cold increasing in winter indicates snow.
A "fall" after very calm and warm weather indicates rain, with equally weather.

THE IRISH LINEN MANUFACTURES.—A very wise and vigorous effort is being made in Munster by Mr. Maguire, the Mayor of Cork, and others, to get up linen manufactories, to alleviate the distress of the labouring population, and it has received generous encouragement from Belfast, a city rapidly growing wealthy under the vast stimulus recently given to the linen trade. Only thirty-four years ago the first linen mill was built in Belfast, and now they are manufacturing and selling there near 1,100 tons of flax a week, at £70 a ton, and the population is increasing so rapidly that 1,000 new houses have been built in Belfast in the course of the last year. The true way to counteract the alleged disproportion between the agricultural population and the land in Ireland, is not to send away the people to America, but to found manufactures, and we are happy to see that the Cork attempt is being repeated in Limerick.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

T. J. WHITE.—Your writing is very tolerable; and, though a little too formal, with practice will do for an office.

FRANK HILDEBR.—Your writing is clear and bold, but wants ease and finish, which practice will no doubt give it.

E. J.—Marriage with a deceased wife's sister or a deceased husband's brother is not legal.

FRED CARCAIN.—You appear certainly to possess facility in rhyming; and if you cultivate the gift, you may attain to the faculty of writing poetry.

HENRY J. C., a young clergyman, who wishes for a partner in life, desires to correspond with "Kate"; but defers particulars until he hears from her.

A. C.—Write to the manager of the refreshment department, or to the general manager (Mr. Bowley) at the Palace.

VULCAN.—We cannot put you in the way of making artificial teeth; though, no doubt, any respectable working dentist would not object to instruct you in the art.

JANET R. is willing to make "W. G." a happy Benedict. She is generally called "a pretty girl," is 5 ft. 4 in. in height, a very good figure, and a Protestant.

A POOR MAN.—We think your handwriting very passable, and quite good enough for either of the situations you mention.

NELLIE, who is rather *petite*, with golden hair and blue eyes, and has received a good education, replies to "A. B. C." that she would be glad to hear further from him.

OSWALD P.—We cannot tell the meaning of your surname, or whether it has any. Your Christian name, Oswald, is Saxon, and signifies the ruler of a house.

BELLA will be very happy to correspond with any candidate for her hand who is four or five years older than "H. A. W."

ANTONIA MARIA AGNETE.—Translations from foreign languages are undertaken, we believe, at Mr. Hoque's French Library, Holborn. The charge would be regulated by the length of the translation required.

J. HINDSON.—You are not singular in your opinion that *The London Reader* "is a perfect wonder in literature;" and we are much obliged for your encomiums.

ROMEO, who is twenty-two, 5 ft. 9 in., with dark hair and mustache, and possessing an independent income, would be happy to exchange *cartes* with any young lady matrimonially disposed.

H. W., who is eighteen years of age and 5 ft. in height, passable in appearance, and of steady and sober habits, is anxious to correspond with any young lady who might consider these qualifications sufficient.

W. P. B.—We cannot possibly divine on what subject you desire us to recommend you a book. For a "young tradesman," however, "Poor Richard's" maxims would be no bad study. Your writing is good; your orthography not so.

HERBERT M., nineteen years of age, 5 ft. 10½ in. in height, who is called extremely handsome, and has £400 a year settled on him, would like to correspond with a lady who is fully domesticated, and has received a good education.

E. M. O., whose age is nineteen, would like to correspond with "C. H. A." She has light brown hair and light blue eyes, is 5 ft. in height, has a fortune and a true and loving heart to offer; and is a lady by birth and education.

J. W. is delighted at the description "Alice" gives of herself, and would be pleased to correspond with her. He is 5 ft. 10 in., fair, has auburn hair, is good-tempered, and has good prospects.

H. SMITH.—Address a letter to the Civil Service Commissioners, Dean's Yard, Westminster, London; and you will be supplied with forms containing all the requisite particulars.

BOSSA FIDE, who is twenty-eight years of age, 5 ft. in height, of military appearance, fair complexion, considered good-looking, intelligent, of amative disposition, and in a respectable and comfortable position, aspires to the hand of "A. E. C.," "Bella," or "An Orphan."

EVA VERNON, a bright-eyed, dark-haired, rosy-cheeked Scottish lassie of eighteen summers, who has no fortune, but is a good hand at housekeeping, affectionate and good-tempered, desires to correspond with a gentleman, dark, tall and prepossessing, who is in search of a wife.

IDAEMAL, who describes himself as aged twenty, 5 ft. 4½ in. in height, dark complexion, hair and eyes, and considered good-looking, would like to open a matrimonial correspondence with any of our fair readers who may consider him a sufficiently desirable *parti*.

NELLY.—If you have well weighed all the *pros* and *cons* of a theatrical life, and are, nevertheless, determined to adopt it, you should communicate with a theatrical agent. Let a male friend do this for you, if possible. Your handwriting is very fair.

C. T. T.—In naval architecture the rudder is first fitted in; then the ballast is put on board, and, last of all, the cargo and the sails. It is far otherwise in the fitting-up and forming of man: he is launched into life with the cargo of his faculties aboard, and all the sails of his passions set, but it is the long and painful work of his life to acquire the balance of experience, and to form the rudder of reason; hence it too often happens that his frail vessel is shipwrecked before

he has laid in the necessary quantity of ballast, or that he has been so long in completing the rudder, that the vessel has become too crazy to benefit by its application.

ORPHEUS is a young man of a Platonic turn of mind, and wishes to meet with a lady who is not on matrimonial thoughts intent, and who would correspond with him for the mutual pleasure of exchanging confidences. We imagine Orpheus is a very young man indeed.

F. HESAY offers himself as a candidate for the hand of "Kate" (or "Maudie," if "Kate" should decline). He is 5 ft. 10 in. in height, good deportment, fair complexion; of passable education, and comfortably situated. Age twenty-eight.

CHARLES E. STANLEY, who is twenty-three years of age, about the medium height, and considered good-looking, who has, moreover, an income at present of £130 per year, and good expectations, desires to form the acquaintance of some young lady who would venture with him on matrimony.

HELEN S.—You have not quoted the lines correctly, and they were not written by Alexander Smith. They are Tennyson's, and run thus:—

"I hold it true, what's'er befall—
I feel it when I sew my soul—
'Tis better to have loved and lost,
Than never to have loved at all."

FLORENCE says it has occurred to her that she would exactly suit "A Lancashire Reader." She is twenty years of age, rather dark, clear complexion, has very bright eyes, and is about 5 ft. 2 in. in height, is good-tempered and tolerably accomplished.

A PATIENCE.—If you are afflicted with blotches on the face, mix three ounces of rose-water with one drachm of sulphate of zinc, wet the face with the mixture, gently dry it, and then touch it over with cold cream, which also dry off gently. We are not sure, however, that we quite understand your letter.

HEARTSEASE, a bachelor of twenty-five years, with dark brown hair and hazel eyes, 5 ft. 9 in. high, fond of home, and an accountant with first-rate prospects, is desirous of corresponding with a lady with a view to matrimony. The lady must be twenty-three years of age, of medium height, with a loving disposition, and thoroughly domesticated.

LATRA LYDE.—We have come to the conclusion, on your own showing, that you are a coquette, and therefore deserve the isolation in which you now find yourself. One of your own sex has truly said that

"She who oh! finds her self-esteem

In others' admiration, begs an alms;

Depends on others for her daily food,

And is the very servant of her slaves;

Though oftentimes, in a fantastic hour,

Over men she may a childish pow'r exert,

Which not ennobles, but degrades her more."

GEORGE ECKERTON is a young man of Crewe, who cannot tell what to do to obtain a wife. He is 5 ft. 11 in. in height, dark complexion, and in receipt of £280 per annum, with a good prospect of occupying a better position shortly. Perhaps he may find favour in the eyes of some of our fair readers.

JOHN and **ALBERTUS** are desirous of corresponding with two amiable and well-domesticated young ladies. "John" is tall, dark complexion, has dark hair and dark eyes. "Albertus" is tall, dark auburn hair, hazel eyes, and fair complexion. Both are in mercantile situations, and have very good prospects.

C. B., being desirous to settle in life, wishes to meet with a lady not more than twenty years of age, domesticated, good-looking, and respectfully connected. No dowry expected. C. B. is the principal in an improving business, is twenty-one years of age, 5 ft. in height, dark brown hair, blue eyes, aquiline nose. *Carte-de-visite* expected.

LILY MARSH has many admirers, but is willing to discard them all in favour of "A Lancashire Reader." "Lily" is just nineteen years of age, fair, has bright blue eyes, very white teeth, and good complexion, very affectionate disposition, and, on the whole, thinks she would make a very good wife for the "Lancashire Reader."

R. B. S.—We can only give you our sympathy. You are not the first who has had good reason to exclaim—

"Alas! our young affections run to waste,
Or water but the desert; whence arise
But weeds of dark luxuriance, tares of haste,
Rank at the core, though tempting to the eyes,
Flowers, whose wild odours breathe but acromies,
And trees whose fruits are poison—such the plants
Which spring beneath her steps as Passion flies
O'er the world's wilderness, and vainly pants
For some celestial fruit, forbidden to our wants."

A YOUNG MAN in the country wants a nice little wife. His age is twenty-five, his height 5 ft. 4 in., his eyes blue, his countenance smiling, his health good, his moral principles ditto. The lady need not be handsome, but she must have good hair, eyes, &c., and also be accomplished—on the sewing-machine.

LUCKY WELZ.—Don't you know that obedience to rules and orders is essential to all school discipline? Obey your master's instructions, do your duty, and dust your desks, as he desires. We had to do much harder things when we were a "fag" in school, and found ourselves none the worse for it.

DAISY, who is pretty, and has received a good sound education, replies to "W. G." that, although not in want of beaux, "W. G.'s" description of himself seems to answer her views of a good husband, and of one she could love. "W. G." in reply, to mention his age. ("Daisy's" handwriting is good.)

EDITH LASCHELLES is charmed with the description which "A Lancashire Reader" has given of himself, and is ready to accept his yoke. "Edith" is more than 5 ft., she has fair hair, blue eyes, small features, most loving disposition, and generally admired by both ladies and gentlemen. "Edith" has £200 a year income.

T. M.—"Rights of Women."—"The Court of Queen's Bench in Ireland has decided that females have a right to vote for town commissioners, but not to fill the office of commissioner. This decision increases the number of franchises possessed by the ladies to three—namely, the election of town commissioners, poor-law guardians, and church-

wardens. And, although they may not be town commissioners, yet they are eligible to hold the offices of commissioners of sewers, keepers of prisons, sheriffs of counties, and clerks of the Queen's Bench. It cannot any longer be argued—even by those formidable specimens of the sex who attended the last Social Science Meetings in Dublin, under mock and lead pencil in hand, and read "papers"—that women are "excluded from that occupation for which, of all others, they are fitted by nature and instincts."

T. D.—Truths come but slowly on man, and long it is before these angel visits are acknowledged by humanity. The world clings to its errors and avoids the truth, lest its light should betray their miserable follies. So that, in your case, it would be wise not to fret over your disappointment. Bear in mind the Scriptural maxim, "That a prophet is never honoured in his own country."

RACHEL.—You have a difficult task before you, but be firm. To be exquisitely alive to gentle impressions, and yet to be able to persevere when the prosecution of a design requires it—to preserve an immovable breast amidst the most imperious causes of subduing emotion, is not perhaps an impossible constitution of mind, but it is the rarest of endowments.

MINKIE GRAY wishes much to be married, and writes very reproachfully of the young men of Sydney. She will be twenty next birthday, is 5 ft. 4 in. in height, black hair and eyebrows, blue eyes and small rosy mouth; possesses no money, but a heart overflowed with love. Minnie does not care for good looks, but would like her husband to be steady and fond of home.

HOPFUL would be glad to correspond with "Londin." She is seventeen years of age, tall and well-formed, with auburn hair and dark grey eyes, is of a lively disposition, and has received a thorough English education, with a few accomplishments. Back numbers of the *Reader* can be obtained by forwarding stamps to the publisher. Hand-writing fair.

F. R.—If you mean a chalk cerate, you should mix as much prepared chalk as you can into some lard, so as to form a thick ointment, to be used for burns or scalds. Chalk mixture you can buy at any chemist's. For the ointment take three ounces and a half of soap liniment, and half an ounce of tincture of Spanish flies; mix, and shake well. To be used for chronic bruises, sprains, and rheumatism, &c.

ALICE MAUD and **SARINA** are two Brighton belles, who desire to become brides. "Alice Maud" is twenty-one years of age, of medium height, has dark hair and eyes, good figure, happy disposition, fond of home society, and is very musical. "Sarina" is of a tall, commanding figure, with light brown hair, blue eyes, small features, and is generally admired—aged twenty-two. Both have small incomes, and belong to most respectable families.

MOSES ROSE BUD is about the medium height, slight, and a very nice figure, with light, wavy hair, and blue eyes, has no fortune (and does not expect any), but is a respectable tradesman's daughter, who can play the piano, and sing well enough to amuse at home, and, in "sweet seventeen." We must add to this that "Moses Rose Bud's" writing is very ladylike.

BARNARD W.—A very good soap to whiten the hands may be made thus:—Mix a wine-glassful of *essence-de-cologne* with another of lemon juice, then scrape two cakes of brown Windsor soap to a powder, and mix in a mould. Let it harden before using. We have given this receipt already. Your writing is very good, being regular, bold, and clear; it would do best for a legal office.

LIZIE has lovers who are all too young; she does not care for beauty, and wishes to marry a gentleman who is more than twenty-five, is able to keep a wife in comfort, and a member of the Established Church. The lady is twenty-three years of age, 5 ft. 3 in. in height, not beautiful, but nice-looking and ladylike; has not any fortune, but very good expectations in the future, and a true and loving heart to bestow at once.

GEORGE W. desires, in good faith, our lady readers to be made acquainted that he does not like the idea of living a bachelor any longer. He is twenty-eight years of age, has brown hair, blue eyes, Roman nose, and rather fair complexion, is 5 ft. 8 in. in height, has belonged to the Worcester Rifle Corps since its formation, and will be glad to exchange *cartes-de-visite* with some young lady under twenty. (The handwriting is good.)

670.—Tambour embroidery is wrought on a kind of cushion or spherical body, stretched on a frame, so that it somewhat resembles the head of a drum or tambourine. Machines of extraordinary ingenuity having been invented for tambour-work, the art is now seldom practised by hand. We regret that we are unable to inform you where to obtain a frame, but a cabinet-maker would readily make one for you, and the cotton you can obtain at any good Berlin-wool warehouse.

GEO. M. PULSFORD.—The maxim may be true that *poeta nascitur, non fit*; nevertheless, the faculty of the true poet is not only born with him, but is developed and improved by practice and experience. The ability to write poetry is not merely a natural gift—it is also an acquired art; and you have yourself very nearly hit the exact truth in saying that "a poetic vein is useless without a cultivated mind," neither of which, however, do we deny to you; on the contrary, we think you possess both. The lines enclosed are very creditable as a specimen of extempore versification.

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